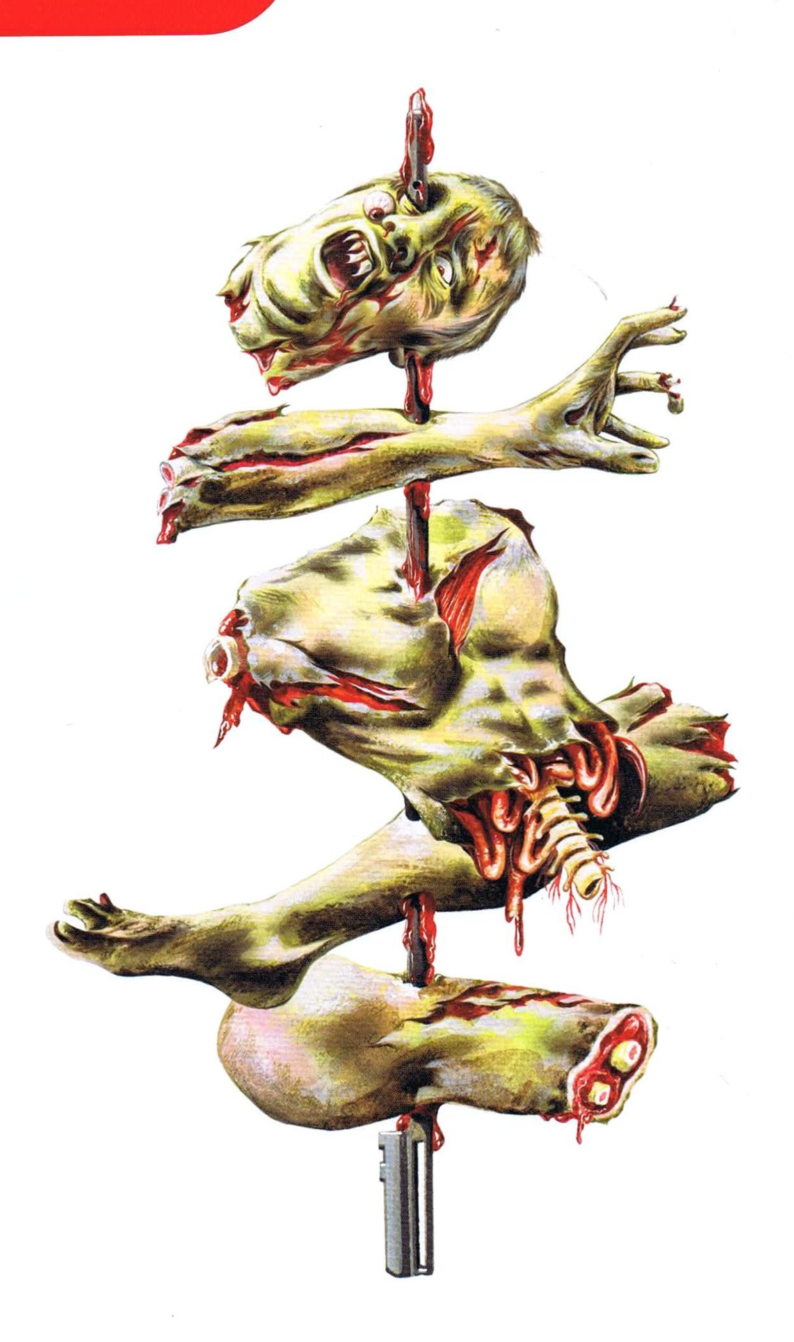

GAMECUBE • DS • GBA • NINTENDO Wii
NGC
ISSUE #120
JUNE 2006 / £3.99
100% UNOFFICIAL
HARVEST MOON
REVIEWED ON GAMECUBE
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMIN
Wii RULE!
Nintendo's new Revolution
10 reasons why wii love it
PLUS!
FIFA World Cup 2006 reviewed
The 20 Greatest Nint-endings
POSTERS!
JUNE 2006
£3.99
06
9 771475 584029
Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION
gamesradar.com







New ways to scare, slash, stab, kill and survive.



Nintendo




Use the stylus as a knife and lash out at the undead as they come on smarter and faster than ever. Test your sanity in a fully 3D world of claustrophobia and tension, then drag your friends in with you for a bout of wireless multiplayer horror. Resident Evil Deadly Silence out on 31.03.06

CAPCOM

**NGC**
**INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING**
30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
Tel: 01225 442244 Fax: 01225 732275
Email: *ngc@futurenet.co.uk*

**EDITORIAL**
**Acting Editor** Martin Kitts
**Writings** Jes Bickham
**More writings** Mark Green
**Even more writings** Alex Cooke
**Subbings** Chrissy Williams
**Artings** Damian McGee
**And artings** Andy Ounsted
**And artings again** Seth Singh
**Plus!** Gearóid Reidy, Andrew Mills, Paul Edwards, Sarah Seamarks, and probably a couple of other people, too.

**PRODUCTION**
**Production Coordinator** Lee Thomas
**Production Manager** Rose Griffiths
**Purchasing Manager** Michelle Rogers

**CIRCULATION**
**Product Manager** Russell Hughes
**Subs Manager** James Greenwood

**ADVERTISING/MARKETING**
**Advertising Director** Jayne Caple
**Advertising Manager** Darren Gratton
*darren.gratton@futurenet.co.uk*
**Marketing Executive** Kim Brown

**MANAGEMENT DESK**
**Managing Director** Robert Price
**Publisher** Mike Lamond
**Publishing Director** Mia Walter
**Group Publisher** James Binns
**Overseas Licensing** Simon Wear

**SUBS & DISTRIBUTION**
Future Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST RLSC-SXSE-SKKT, Unit 4, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9EF.
Tel: 0870 837 4722

Distributed by Marketforce (UK) Ltd, 5th Floor, Low Rise Building, Kings Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS
Tel: 0207 633 3333

Overseas distribution by:
Future Publishing Ltd. Tel: 01225 442244

Printed in the UK by TPL Ltd












The text paper in this magazine is totally chlorine free. The paper manufacturer and Future Publishing have been independently certified in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council.

**Non-executive Chairman** Roger Parry
**Chief Executive** Greg Ingham
**Group Financial Director** John Bowman
Tel +44 1225 442244 *www.futureplc.com*

**Future Publishing Ltd is part of Future plc.**
Future produces carefully targeted special-interest magazines for people who share a passion. We aim to satisfy that passion by creating titles offering value for money, reliable information, smart buying advice and which are a pleasure to read. Today we publish more than 150 magazines in the UK, US, France and Italy. Over 100 international editions of our magazines are also published in 30 other countries across the world.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).

**www.futureplc.com**

**Future Games: The First Choice For Gamers**
This magazine is brought to you by Future Publishing Ltd., the makers of Edge, PC Gamer, GamesMaster, PSM2, PlayStation2 Official Magazine-UK and Xbox World.

gamesradar.com



# ENDINGS & BEGINNINGS



So, this month is all about change. Apart from the minor news that Nintendo has decided to call Revolution 'Wii' (thanks!) you might be interested to know that you're holding – in your hands – the very last edition of the UK's longest-running Nintendo magazine… Unless you've placed it on a table, in which case you're weeping salty tears all over this special, final edition of NGC. Please don't get my face all wet.

Yes, after nine years, 120 issues and more fantastic memories than my Mario-addled mind can possibly recall, NGC is shuffling into the warp pipe of history, from where it will re-emerge transformed into something even more wonderful. Turn to page 50 and see if you can guess what it's going to be.

One thing I can guarantee is that the unique, paper-based DNA that began with the much-loved Super Play back in 1992 and evolved into N64/NGC Magazine will be very much in evidence in our new venture. I think you're going to be delighted with it.

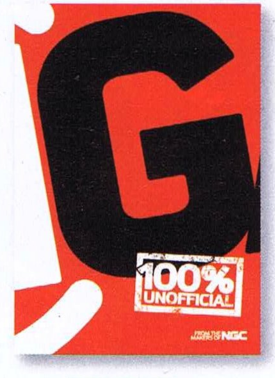
But that's all going to have to wait just a few short weeks. For now, it's time to bid a fond farewell to the magazine that brought you Worldy Bloke, Enjiki and the mighty Big Stick™. And if that means nothing to you, be sure to check out your local newsie on June 29th, so you can be in at the start of something fresh and exciting, yet strangely familiar.

I hope you've had as much fun reading NGC as we've all had working on it. But this isn't goodbye. See you in five weeks.

**MARTIN KITTS**




**APRIL 1997** **JUNE 2006**

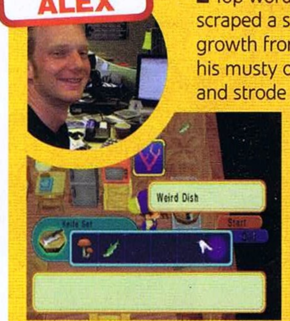



**BEYOND...**




## THIS MONTH WE HAVE MOSTLY BEEN PLAYING...

**ALEX**



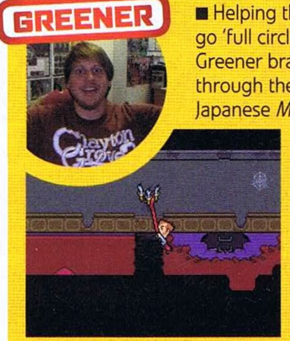

■ Top wordsman Alex C scraped a strange fungal growth from the insides of his musty old gumboots and strode out into the muddy realm of the farming RPG. His speech now consists of three phrases: "Ooo," "Arrr," and, "Come by, my pretty lamb." Worrying.

**JES**



■ Jes spent most of the month trawling the archives for the retrospective feature you'll find on page 12. Happily purged of nostalgia, he had a crack at *Eyeshield 21*, an anime gridiron game, and gave it the most fearsome kicking. There's a moral in there, somewhere.

**GREENER**



■ Helping the magazine go 'full circle' this month, Greener bravely played through the inscrutably Japanese *Mother 3* – the most delayed game of all time, having first been previewed in issue 1, nine years ago. His verdict: "Needs a few months' extra work."

# NGC'S FIVE STAR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UNMISSABLE THIS ISSUE!

1 PAGE 7

## WHY Wii WILL ROCK YOU

**CONSOLE CRAZY!**

All the latest news on the Wii and a vision of what is to come.




2 PAGE 12

## RETROSPECTIVE

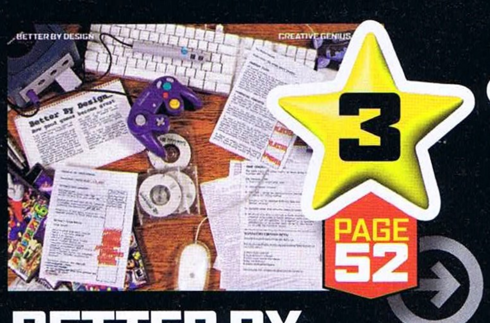
**BACK IN TIME**

Having a quiet think about all the great games we've brought you exclusive reports on over the last nine years. Bring tissues.

# HARVEST MOON: MAGICAL MELODY

PAGE 22

Farm and flirt the days away...











3 PAGE 52

## BETTER BY DESIGN

**NINJAS DIED FOR THIS**

We take a peek inside the murky world of games development. Who's your daddy?

4 PAGE 62

## NINT-ENDINGS

**BECAUSE IT'S THE FINAL NGC**

Have we bowed out in style? Here's how 20 Nintendo legends strolled off into the sunset, monkeys in hand.

## TIMEWARP

**PAST IT**

A kitsch-styled burst of retro ramblings, brought to you by videogaming affectionado and pirate, Mr Mark Green.

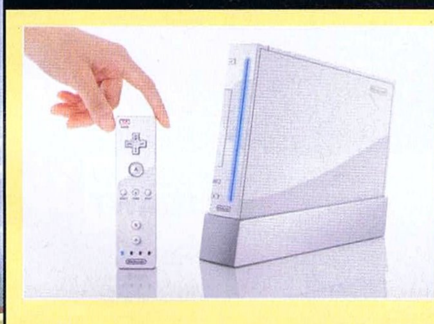
5 PAGE 66

# WHAT'S IN NGC?

What is in any of us? How terrifying to look deep into the soul, and see only coloured blocks.

## NEWS

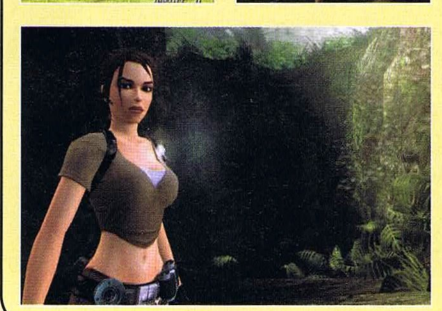
More gossip than you can milk a cow with...











## REVIEWS

How many games can *you* cram in your kisser?

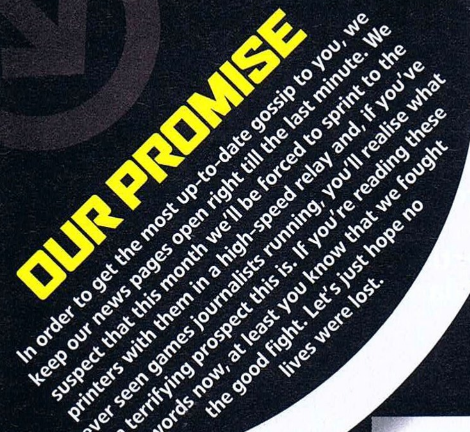


## OTHER STUFF

Features coming out of our ears! (Ears if we're lucky...)





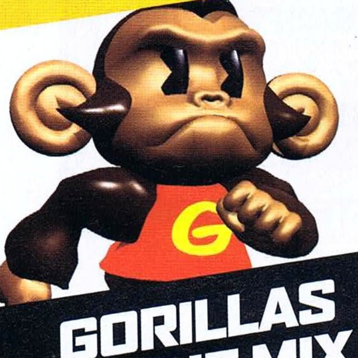



NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST

# NEWSDESK

## IN NEWS THIS MONTH

**LOVELY LARA**
COMING TO GBA, DS AND GAMECUBE! P8



**GORILLAS IN THE MIX**
MONKEYS ON Wii P9




**PLUS!**
WRITE YOU ARE! P10
AND MORE...

# Wii-JERK REACTION

## Revolution's new name walks the line.



▷ Why, it's the colour of angels. Ah-a-ah-a.

So, what do you think? By the time you read this, the new name for the console formerly known as Revolution will have been announced; and it is, of course, Wii. Not Nintendo Wii, just Wii. And we have to say that, like the rest of you, we were a teensy bit shocked when we first heard. Not because it's so unusual – as Nintendo themselves say, Google, Virgin and iPod were all very strange and unfamiliar names when first announced – but because, well, it sounds like a bodily function. Not ideal, that, as anyone who's heard all the jokes can attest to – and the fact that Nintendo released an explanation of the name along with the logo means that it's not exactly transparent with meaning.

However, Wii's dramatic unveiling at this year's E3 (which, again, will have happened by the time you read this) will surely have overshadowed the problematic name, thus proving that Nintendo might just know what they're doing. Think about it: announce the name, give people a couple of weeks to chew it over, get the urine jokes out of their system, and then show them the actual hardware and games at E3. Nintendo's policy this time is one of 'disruption', and this fits perfectly with that. It's a unique name and, despite the odd connotations, is already instantly recognisable, both as a picture *and* a word. And there's logic behind it, too – the double 'i' represents both the Wii controller and people playing together, as does the actual name ('we', see?). Clever, that. But there's no two ways about it; it's a controversial name, and one that walks the fine line between genius and damnation. Here's what the kids at Team **NGC** think:



**Martin**
It's definitely a grower. While it still sounds a bit silly, it's undeniably distinctive. The logo looks brilliant. Hopefully everyone will run out of jokes by the launch, and we'll just think of it as a great name, like Cillit Bang. It's about time someone gave a games machine a name that doesn't sound aggressive or exclusively masculine – for those reasons I reckon Wii is a better title than Revolution.



**Greener**
Normally, if you have to spend five paragraphs in a press release explaining a product's name, you really need to go back to the drawing board and have a rethink. Every new name's a shock – Game Boy probably sounded dreadful when Nintendo first announced it – so I'd like to see how my brain takes to this a few days and weeks down the line. (Sits, waiting)



**Jes**
My first thought was: "Nintendo were doing so well, and this has spoilt the goodwill they've generated with building up Revolution". Sorry, Wii. But, like Martin, I think it's a grower too; it's refreshing to have something so different to the usual console nomenclature, and it immediately separates it from the videogame ghetto perceived by the mainstream. It's like the DS… but more so.

# TOP 10 REASONS WHY Wii WILL ROCK YOU

Wii™

**The name might be problematic,** but the reasons why it'll be brilliant couldn't be more obvious.



## 1 CONTROL

That controller. Just think of the freedom, ease of play and inclusiveness it offers – imagine granny or your kid sister trying to get their heads around *Timesplitters 2*'s dual-stick controls, f'rinstance. The remote-style controller works considerably better than the motion sensor shoved, rather shamelessly, into Sony's PS3 pad.

## 2 DEVELOPMENT

There's also the way the controller forces developers to think differently, and come up with new ways of playing and new styles of game. We've seen a million war-based first-person shooters – the Wii controller will hopefully change this. (Unless we get a million war-based shooters that use the Wii controller. But we hope not.)



## 3 BALANCE

The Wii controller also creates a balance between what's happening on your telly and what your hands are doing. In a stroke, videogames are now all about physical feedback; it's no longer about just pressing buttons, but actually interacting with physical movements other than pushing things with your thumb.

## 4 ACCESS

The Virtual Console. Hundreds of old games from previous Nintendo consoles, that would otherwise be consigned to the dustbin of history, will be available to download. Imagine it – *Super Mario Kart*, *Pilotwings 64* and *GoldenEye*, preserved and playable forever…




## 5 DOWNLOADS

It'll talk to your DS, and the possibilities here are endless. Imagine being able to download, say, the SNES *Pilotwings* via the Virtual Console, and then beam it to your DS to play on the move. That's be brilliant, wouldn't it?





## 6 NEW VERSIONS

New versions of your favourite games. Nintendo changed games forever with the advent of 3D graphics and *Super Mario 64*; they've now correctly identified that shinier graphics are no longer the way forward. Instead, it's all about *how* you play games, and Wii provides a revolution (if you will) in that respect. So expect a new *Mario* that is as different to *Mario Sunshine* as *Mario 64* was to *Super Mario World*.

## 7 ONLINE

It's online! DS did it first, and in amazingly successful style, and all signs point towards Wii allowing for online multiplayer gaming in the same way, and through the same dinky USB adaptor via Wi-Fi. Next-gen online *Mario Kart* in front of your telly? We're drooling at the very thought.



## 8 DVDs

It plays DVDs! Sure, it's not high-definition, but how many people have got HD TVs? Not us. We know this is just a fancy extra, and other consoles have already done this, but it'll be a nice fancy extra nonetheless.

## 9 POWER

Developers reckon Wii is about twice as powerful as a Gamecube, and it shares a lot of architecture with the GC, meaning games can be developed quickly due to existing familiarity. That's good for the developers and good for gamers too – hopefully we'll see more variety and more games.

## 10 ZELDA!

You'll be able to play *Twilight Princess* on your Gamecube, as God intended, but popping it into your Wii will allow you to play with the remote-style controller. That'll be real sweet.

▷ **It's a link… to the future!**

# GIRL ACTIONS

## Legendary femithief on GC.



Seeing is believing, as they say. Lara Croft's making her first *ever* appearance on a home Nintendo system – and we've got shots. *Tomb Raider Legend* is the lauded Return To Form™ the cash-flushed franchise had been waiting for, all vines and guns and platform-based puzzling and – for the Nintendo version – "new and exciting features". It's looking very classy on Gamecube, even if the lady Lara is headed for the cover of Heat with a super-protruding ribcage like that. She's also driving a forklift truck, for some reason.

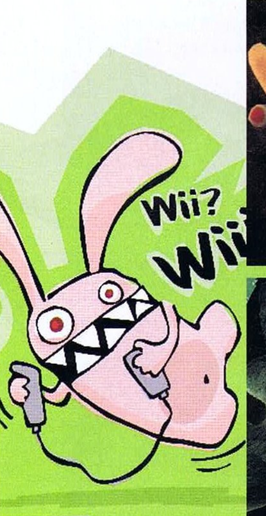
*Legend* is out later this year, along with versions for DS *and* GBA – which makes three games, putting paid to any 'Lara's two big hits' puns we might have come up with. Incidentally, we'd never really noticed before how big her chin is.



△ She looks surprisingly good for someone who's been – shall we say – *around* a lot.

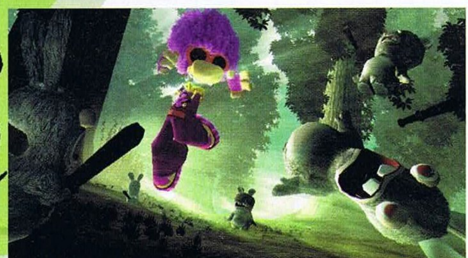
# RAYMAN RETURNS

## French hero on next-gen? Wii!*









△ Hare today, gone tomorrow – poor jokes go wild!



He just will not die. *Rayman*'s (no)-elbowing his way back into the limelight with a game that looks part Wallace & Gromit, part Austin Powers, and part your usual pastel-coloured platforming mad-marathon. And it's Wii-bound!

Developed in Ubisoft's Montpellier studio (*Beyond Good & Evil, King Kong*), the tentatively-titled *Rayman 4* has always promised to be "very different", in the words of series granddaddy Michel Ancel. Now we know it's about hair and hares – Rayman, with an afro, skinning "demonic rabbits" and tearing across twisted worlds on the back of spiders, eagles, sharks and fish. Sounds a bit *Donkey Kong Country*.

Wii control? Shake left to right and up and down for kick-punching moves; rotate to control your animal steed. Fine by us, but the rabbit in the corner of the screenshots really doesn't look that happy about it.

* This writer has been fired, with an elephant gun – Ed.

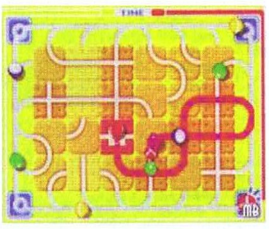
# PANIC BUTTONS

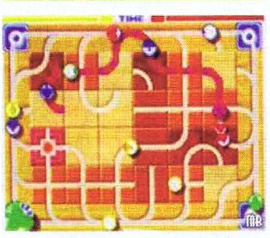
## Actually, it mainly uses the stylus...



What's going on here? We're not entirely sure. But we can tell it's going to make our hair curl with happiness. *Touch Panic* is a new DS puzzler from Aki Corp (last game: *Def Jam Vendetta*), and it seems to combine a) those old sliding block puzzles and b) an outpouring of cutesy coloured marbles that want to make your life a misery.

The screens mainly seem to be from tutorials, but it's possible to puzzle out the details: tap and slide the stylus to move tiles, and form an unbroken groove that the little panic balls can slide around. You'll earn bonus points for getting the balls into their matching 'homes', and there are at least 50 'tricks' you can perform. More details pending – hands-on giggles from us after E3.





△ A bit like the film Panic Room but with balls.



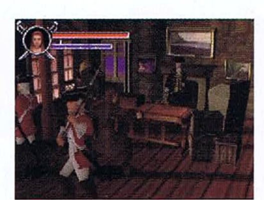
# CHEST FOR LAUGHS

## Buckle swashes on your DS.



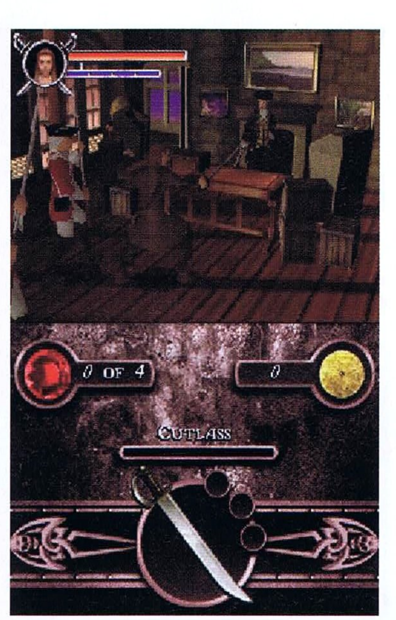
Arr, Jim lad! Cough. The preview code for *Pirates of the Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest* arrived in the office this month (disappointingly not clutched in the hand of a wizened and foul-smelling one-eyed zombie pirate), and while we weren't particularly salivating at the prospect of another film-licensed game, this does actually look like it could be a pleasant surprise. It's a third-person sword-waggler rendered in shiny 3D, and it looks awfully nice indeed, its gloomy caverns more than just a little bit reminiscent of the environments in the Gamecube cracker, *Eternal Darkness*.

It's mostly about combat, with a few combos thrown in for good measure, along with a decent selection of weapons and a smattering of minigames. It's also got a co-operative mode playable over Nintendo's Wi-Fi connection, but regrettably we've not had the chance to try this out yet. Looks like being a cut above the usual summer blockbuster fodder, then. Fingers crossed and parrots at the ready, eh?



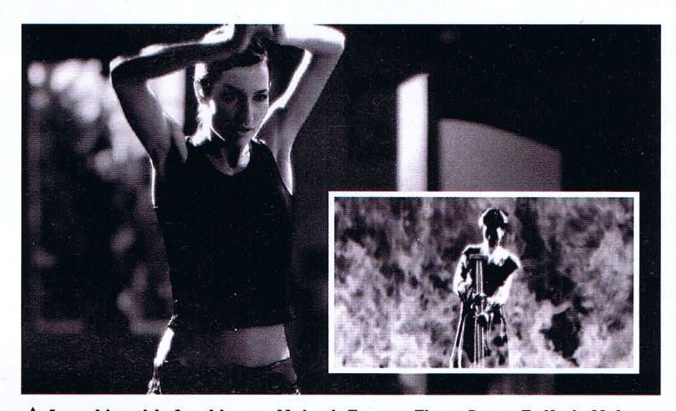







△ **Fine. More pirate-based fun. Will Kermit the Frog be in this version?**

# DOWN IN THE MOUTH



△ **A working title for this was *Majestic Trouser-Tigers Dance To Katie Melua.***

## A sad game to make you happy. Eh?

By the time you read this, E3 will be over and done with, and its delights and disappointments will be discussed by all and sundry. Magazine deadlines being what they are, however, we're writing this a couple of days before the show starts. How's that for timing, eh?

So, in all probability, you'll have already seen *Sadness* in action on the ol' internet. But, as we type, all we can tell you is that it's looking mighty intriguing and worth a little wonder about; it's a black-and-white Wii game set before World War One.

Yep, you read that right; black and white. Obviously we thought the game was meant to be quite noirish – developers Nibris, however, have stated that it's meant to reflect the period's monochrome cinema instead. Intigued? So are we. The images shown here are taken from the game's trailer, and only one appears to be in-game – a woman possibly thrusting what looks like a shovel into a zombie/something unpleasant. More soon.

# SLUGS ON Wii

## Not real slugs of course, that'd be horrible.




Good news for retro fans (we're looking at you, Green) – SNK have announced that *Metal Slug Anthology* is set to arrive on both Wii and DS. Described as "a full arcade collection including many additional surprises", expect a bumper compilation of *Metal Slugs* past and present, offering many hours of making little men run around and shoot each other. No news as yet concerning whether the Wii version will make use the remote wand controller, but let's hope so.

# GO BANANAS

## Or, at the very least, collect some.



It was one of the finest Gamecube launch games, and now it looks set to repeat the trick on Wii – *Monkey Ball* returns! *Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz* (sadly, no screens yet) appears to offer a familiar mix of puzzle-fun and party games, but the big twist is that – can you guess? – it uses the Wii controller for three-dimensional fun. Principally, it appears you can 'flick' the controller to jump in the air. Sounds good to us.

# WRITE YOU ARE

**Reader reviews** in all their glory!

## ZOO KEEPER




It's two in the morning and I'm lying awake in bed, my eyes sore. My skin sweating and shaking. My mind distracted. All I can think about is my next fix. I've given up, tried to go cold turkey, tried to resist its grasp. It's no good. I jump out of bed and hurry over to the table, then picking it up in one hand, flipping open the lid and revelling in the glow of the light, I hear the voice "Welcome to *Zoo Keeper*".

If I had to list all the things that are wrong with *Zoo Keeper*, I could go on forever. The Quest mode is complete rubbish, destroyed by the randomness of blocks dropping from above and creating chains. There is a lack of love throughout, with an awful end animation and translation. The game itself is too random, your score dependent on the layout of the animals and whether you get any special blocks that round, and you can play it free on the internet.

But none of this matters, because whenever I close my eyes, all I can see are square-headed animals. It's infiltrated my mind; every waking second has me thinking about my Time Attack high score. I'm obsessed. The simple addition of a stylus has given the game a whole new life. The age of the DS is here.

***Richard Tock, Hull***

**VERDICT 83**

**We Say:** *Zoo Keeper* is indeed scrappy in many ways, but remains brilliant fun. We agree, Tocksy. Can we call you Tocksy? Cheers.

**NGC said** 


## RESIDENT EVIL 4







The moment you pick this game up it strikes you as an all time classic. The graphics and opening atmospheric cutscene strike the balance just right, with the opening village scene, in which everything from the furniture to the windows is customisable, giving a genuine feeling of next generation gaming. The reformed control system strikes the right balance between enhancing the fight scenes while retaining the grassroots horror element. You could take a further sequence from any part of the game, and within five minutes the well told story and inspired set scenes would have even the most cynical gamer converted.

But after half an hour they'd be bored. The problem with *Resident Evil* is that it is the epitome of the survival action horror game; but contains nothing else to balance out the constant action. At its core *Resident Evil 4* is actually nothing more than the supreme example of the *Serious Sam* genre, being nothing more than a series of arenas filled with enemies and ammo. This game is the perfect pure action game, but is unfortunately also a demonstration of the innate weaknesses of the genre.

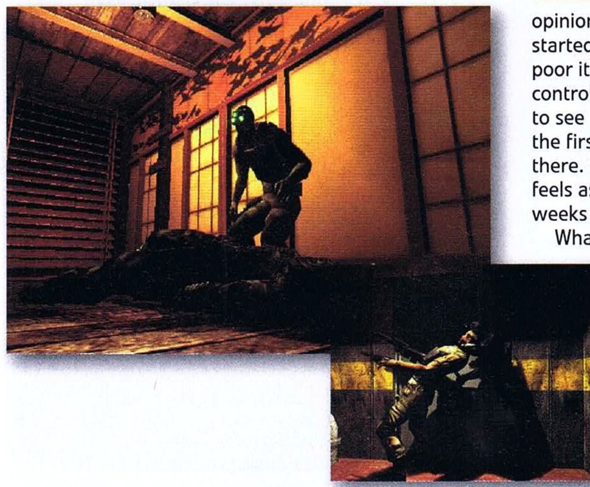
***MR Mitchell, Durham***

**VERDICT 90**

**We Say:** You make an interesting point, but sadly you repeat phrases – 'strike the balance' – and as far as we can remember, there's no, er, 'customisable' furniture. Are you sure you meant to say that?



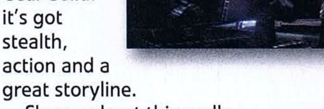

## SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY






After having just read this month's "Write You Are" I thought I would give it a go myself. I chose *Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory* because in my opinion your review was so wrong. When I first started playing the game I was shocked at how poor it was, the visuals were grainy and the controls were unresponsive but I stuck with it to see if it would improve. Once I'd completed the first mission my initial impressions were still there. How could you give this game 85%? It feels as though it was put together in about two weeks with no effort at all.

What's worse is that it's not fun to play either and not once did I use that cool trick between two walls that it shows in the manual. Having said all that there are some good points: firstly if you love stealth then this might be for you; secondly if you can pick it up for a tenner like I did then it's probably worth it and finally it does provide some replay value and room for scope. If you want purely stealth then you could enjoy this but if I were you I'd stick to something like *Metal Gear Solid*: it's got stealth, action and a great storyline.



Shame about this really.

***Matt Walsh, Swindon***




**We Say:** "Not fun to play"? We obviously beg to differ, and the only thing we'd say is that you need to qualify a statement like that more thoroughly. But otherwise you make your points well. Apart from "room for scope" – what does that *mean*?

**NGC said 85**







Jump! *Superstars* is, until Ninty clue up and release *Smash Bros Double Smash!!*, the closest any DS owner can come to a portable version of that paragon of fighters. In fact in many ways *Superstars* exceeds *Smash Bros*, even employing a greater depth of gameplay (it's true). The top screen, always in the shadow of its touch screen sibling, gets an adequate workout displaying a scrolling battle map containing, admittedly, basic character models. However, the lauded Koma system on the touch screen is where the make or break of the fight happens; incorporating strategic planning pre-battle and thumb-numbing action in-game, players summon varieties of support characters with wildly different effects to tip the odds of the exquisitely balanced battle system. An exhaustive mission system to unlock the Koma serves as both tutorial and story, and what a story it probably is! Robots! Nurses!

But it's not all good news, fight fans; *Superstars* lacks one of the key elements of an enjoyable experience; English. However if you can struggle past this trifling barrier you will not find a better fighter on any portable system available online for less than thirty pounds. At least until Nintendo answer the collective howl for *Smash Bros DS*.

***Chris Sutcliffe, via email***

**VERDICT 85**

**We Say:** Great stuff! A fine explanation of why the game is so good and it also made us laugh out loud twice. Your review makes us want to play the game and there's no finer recommendation than that. Plum.






## RESIDENT EVIL






Having played *Resident Evil 0* through *4* and all the various incarnations in between, I can quite confidently claim *Resident Evil* to be by far the most terrifying. Although *Resident Evil 4* is clearly a superior game in almost every aspect, the fast pace and constantly changing environments remove the true bone-chilling terror that the first game in the series expresses so well. The combination of static camera angles, restrictive controls and Crimson Heads instil a feeling of helplessness in the player that can only be compared to trying to carry eight pints of beer across a packed nightclub dance floor on a Saturday night.

Graphically, whilst all the backgrounds are superb high-res static images that are damn near photo realistic, the 3D characters do look a little less impressive these days, especially after playing through *Resident Evil 4*. However, graphics are the last thing on your mind when the zombie you thought you dispatched hours ago comes back to life RIGHT WHEN YOU WALK OVER HIM and proceeds to chase you THROUGH DOORS, clawing at your face. And then some.

The score I have given this game may seem a little pedantic, but I feel it deserves a place in the elusive **NGC** star game compendium.

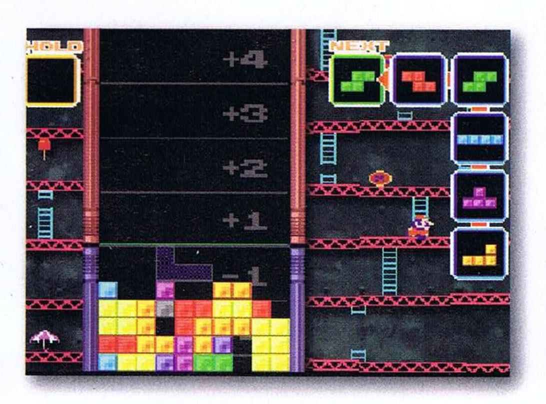
***James Ferguson, via email***




**We Say:** A well-reasoned, well-written review, and not pedantic at all.




## TETRIS DS







The father of computer games. The father of puzzle games. Surely a match made in heaven? Well…

Until now I have never played *Tetris*. I've watched it played, and it looked abysmally boring. A pleasant surprise, then – the game itself is great fun. The thrill of getting the eponymous 'Tetris' and screwing up your rival is great, especially if said rival is human, and playing it online is insanely brilliant.

Now, the cons. *Tetris* relies on high scores to extend its lifespan, but trying for hours to beat my top score by ten points for no reward does not appeal to me. As for the "new, improved" bonus modes, only 'Push' has offered me any fun at all. And, of course, it's on the same console as the wonderful *Meteos*.



In short bursts, *Tetris DS* is great fun (especially in multiplayer), but it can't claim to be excellent any more. That'll be the arthritis, then. Maybe it's time the grandfather of puzzle games retired to the comfy chair.

***Jonathan S Cromie, Camden***




**We Say:** Good stuff Mr Jonathan S Cromie, but how can it not claim to be excellent when playing it online is "insanely brilliant"? Well-reasoned nonetheless.

**NGC said 90**

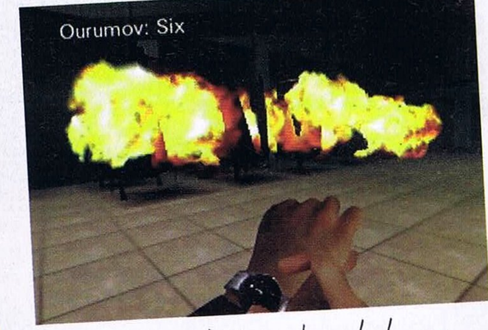
Think we've scored a game wrongly, or do you just want to share your love of the latest big thing? Scribble a 200-word review and either email it to us at NGC@futurenet.co.uk, or send it to the following address. We'll print the best ones we receive in our forthcoming Wii-o-Mag. Get writing!

**Write You Are** **Project Revolution (NGC), Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW**

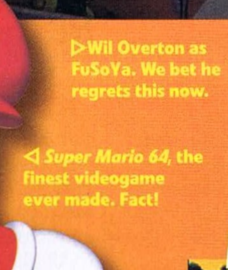
# THE BEST Nintendo

*Take a stroll down memory lane as we relive the good, and the not-so-good, times...*

**And so here we are. NGC magazine launched way back in 1997 as N64 Magazine, and the last nine years have been a rollercoaster ride; full of amazing highs and, it has to be said, a few lows as well. But the time has come for us to move on, so in celebration of nine years of Nintendo goodness, join us as we take a trawl through NGC's and Nintendo's illustrious history of the past near-decade... it's going to be emotional. Sniff. But we'll be back soon, bigger and better than ever...**

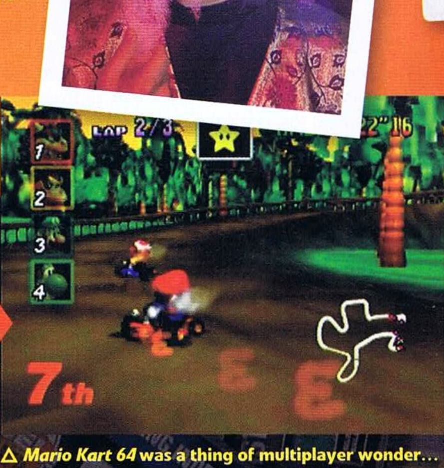


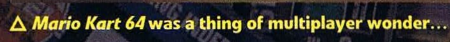

GoldenEye ruled our lunch-hours – Licence To Kill in Facility with Pistols was our scenario of choice.



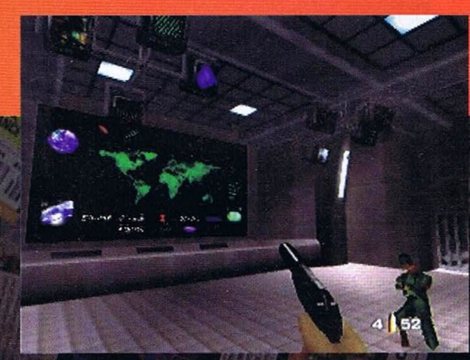
▷Wil Overton as FuSoYa. We bet he regrets this now.

◁ *Super Mario 64*, the finest videogame ever made. Fact!

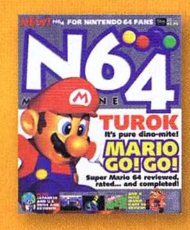


△ *Mario Kart 64* was a thing of multiplayer wonder...



△ ...As was *GoldenEye*. We miss it. Sniff.




## March/April 1997

The N64 finally hit the UK, and with it came the legendary *Super Mario 64*, which changed videogames forever. Buttressed by sterling support from *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*, *Pilotwings 64*, and, er, *Shadows of the Empire*, things would never be quite the same again.

At the same time, rising from the ashes of Super Play like a particularly magnificent paper-based Phoenix, issue one of N64 Magazine hit the shelves, headed up by Super Play alumnus Jonathan Davies, complete with a stunning review of the epoch-making *SM64* that was summed up by Zy Nicholson in Swahili; 'tsufufum'. To this day, we've no idea if that's a real word or not.

## May 1997

A mere month later, Nintendo released *Wave Race 64* – never before had water been so realistically represented in a videogame. It still stands up today, even in the face of the Gamecube sequel, *Wave Race: Blue Storm*.

## July 1997

*Mario Kart 64* arrived in the UK and graced the cover of the magazine. Lunchtimes were never the same again (until *GoldenEye* turned up).

## August 1997

Rare fired their first devastating broadside into 3D gaming brilliance – *Blast Corps* hit the shelves and was described by us as "the glamorous and temperamental mistress to *Mario Kart*'s classically-beautiful and ever-welcoming home-maker". Can't say fairer than that, eh? We also launched our famed *Mario Kart* championship, which saw one future member of the team – Jes Bickham – sitting squarely in the leaderboards.

## September 1997

After a few months of untrammelled N64 excitement, it all went a bit quiet on the release front. In the mag, *Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey* was the lead PAL review. Elsewhere, a feature looking at upcoming N64 RPGs saw art honcho Wil Overton dressing up as *Final Fantasy IV*'s FuSoYa for the first time. Immortality, of sorts, awaited.




## October 1997

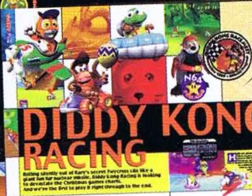
Issue 7 of N64 featured the now-infamous coverline 'Yoinks! It's Yoshi' (cough). Elsewhere, UK releases were still a little thin on the ground (again), but an import review of the US *GoldenEye* immediately made it clear that Rare's Bond-a-thon was one of the best games *ever*. Which isn't




▷ Wave Race 64 sported customisable riders. It's a classic.

▷ Oh what on earth has happened to N64's headline font?

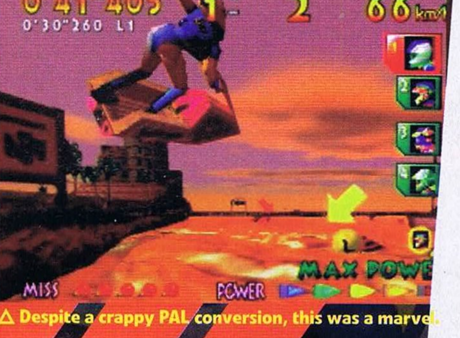




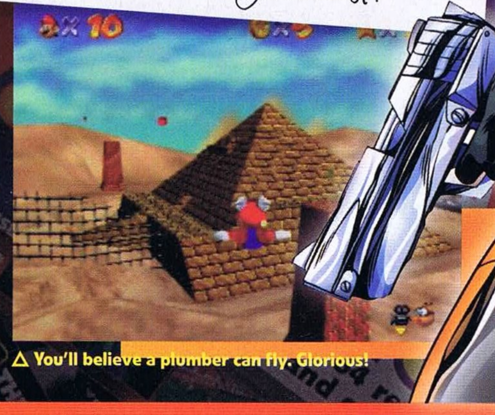


Blast Corps has to be one of the most satisfying games ever made. Smash those buildings to dust!




△ Despite a crappy PAL conversion, this was a marvel.

△ Dig *Pilotwings 64* out today and you'll be amazed.



△ You'll believe a plumber can fly. Glorious!

bad going for a game that, only a couple of your earth-months beforehand, everyone thought would just be a bit of harmless film-licensed frippery…

## November 1997

*Lylat Wars* hit the shops and was brilliant, despite the name being changed from the superb *Starfox 64* to, well, the not-so-great *Lylat Wars*. The game came with a free Rumble Pak in oversized packaging, and we were compelled to give it 90%, calling it "fantastically excellent, but not marvellous and fantastically *legendarily* excellent." It was another time, when adverbs ran wild and free.

## December 1997

Everything changed as *GoldenEye 007* was released in the UK. Tim Weaver said in his 10-page review that "it's 60 quid but it'll be the best 60 quid you've spent since *Mario 64*." Lunchtimes were never the same again, again. Issue 9 of N64 Magazine featured another legendary coverline, this time concerning future-racer *Extreme G*: "it's cheek-flappingly good!" Quite.

## Christmas 1997

Rare challenged *Mario Kart*'s greatness with *Diddy Kong Racing*, which trumped it with a great single-player mode incorporating hovercraft and planes as well as karts, though it couldn't quite hack it in the multiplayer.

## March 1998

James Ashton took over the editorship of the magazine, and N64 issue 13's first birthday celebrations saw us controversially rate *GoldenEye* above *Super Mario 64*. Well, until the readers also did in issue 16.

## July 1998

Issue 17 came in a big black bag with *GoldenEye 2* plastered across it – a cheeky way to announce *Perfect Dark* to the world…

## August 1998

Rare's answer to *Super Mario 64* arrived in the form of the brilliant *Banjo-Kazooie*, scoring a mighty 92%. We still have fond memories of the brilliant Clanker's Cavern level, although *B-K* also established Rare's terrifying penchant for sticking enormous, staring eyes on everything to denote 'personality'.




## November 1998

A double whammy of PAL goodness with the superb *1080 Snowboarding* and the Expansion Pak-led wonder of *Turok 2*. Hindsight is great: did we ever think so highly of *Turok 2* to give it 95%, more than *GoldenEye*? Were we drunk? Ah…

Perfect Dark remains a brilliant achievement. Ace!

Joanna Dark, before Wil got his hands on her.

Perfect Dark took GoldenEye and made it bigger and better. We'll draw a veil over Elvis, though...

Here's one of Jes's choice Game Boy Camera 'muties'.

Shadowman was simply enormous. 70 hours big!

Turok 2 looked amazing for its time. See?




## Christmas 1998

The Christmas to beat all Christmases arrived when *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* did, three long years after it was announced, dropping jaws to floors everywhere. Jes wrote a massive 14-page review and, possessed of mouth-frothing adoration for the game, compared it to Picasso's Guernica, even though the game has nothing to do with the Spanish Civil War – unless we missed some subtext.

## February 1999

Issue 25 saw the release and review of *Rogue Squadron*, Factor 5's ace Star Wars shoot-'em-up that, of course, reached its apogee in *Rogue Leader* on Gamecube.

## April 1999

The creation of a monster! *Mario Party* was unleashed for the first time and we were all quite taken with it. If only we'd had a crystal ball, we could have seen the future and stopped the rot before it got out of control.

## August 1999

Rejoice! The infamous awfulness of Titus' *Superman 64* made its full evil known. Scoring a mighty 14%, the game will live forever due to Lex Luthor's exhortations to "solve my maze!", which consisted of flying through a very linear set of rings. Legendarily rubbish. Until *Carmageddon* came along, anyway.

## September 1999

Issue 32 saw the release of a game we'd long been calling "Zelda's evil twin" – *Shadowman*. A brilliant, sprawling, adult adventure full of voodoo, serial killers and one of the most convincing game worlds we'd ever seen, this mammoth 70-hour effort was Acclaim's finest, er, hour, alongside *Turok*.

## November 1999

Rare continued to prove their worth with the superb *Jet Force Gemini* joining *Blast Corps*, *GoldenEye*, and *Banjo-Kazooie* on the shelves.

## Christmas 1999

The following month, Rare came to the rescue once again with *Donkey Kong 64*, which took the *Banjo-Kazooie* template and exploded it to insane proportions. It was great, but we'll never forgive Rare for the living nightmare that is – shudder – Lanky Kong. Run, children! Run!

Also, the original *Smash Bros* finally made it into UK stores, a full *nine months* after it first hit Japan. And what a game it was. "Mario Kart with fists", indeed. And if that wasn't enough, there was also Angel Studio's brilliant conversion of *Resident Evil 2*, and Tim's excellent strapline for his *Roadsters* review. "Take to the road! Sters." Genius. But still – what a Christmas, eh?

## April 2000

The N64 wasn't exactly renowned for top-notch 'realistic' racing games, but that changed with the release of *Ridge Racer 64* (which, looking back, wasn't really realistic in the least – hmm). Anyway – it was ace! We also took a closer look at the mysterious Project Dolphin – what would eventually become Gamecube – and confidently predicted it would "be able to access the internet" and that it would "be able to play DVD movies". Oh my sides.

## May 2000

Issue 41 saw the first UK review of the excellent *Pokémon Stadium*, the lil' critters' first move into 3D and onto the N64. And very good it was too. In other news, *Metal Gear Solid* was released on the Game Boy Color, and given a whopping 5/5 by our very own Mr Kitts.

It was about this time that both Messrs Weaver and Bickham swanned off to pastures new, leaving Andrea and her – yes – Big Stick™ in charge. Sniff.

## June 2000

After what seemed like an unendurable wait, *Perfect Dark*, the spiritual sequel to *GoldenEye*, was

Debate rages in the office to this day about which was better; Ocarina or Majora's Mask

◁ Phantom Ganon, here. A genuinely eerie moment.

△ Thrills, spills and gunplay for almost all the family.

▷ This is World Bloke, N64 Mag's mascot. He's dead now.

▷ *Majora's Mask* offered a darker slice of *Zelda* fun.

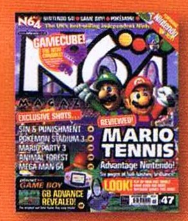
△ The bosses in *Zelda* were the best we'd ever seen.

△ Behold the majesty of *Superman 64*, and tremble!

released. In issue 42 Martin gave it 96%, and quite rightly too. Lunchtimes once again changed forever, as *Perfect Dark* became our latest and greatest multiplayer passion. But the other shoe dropped as Wil Overton left the mag, coincidentally to go and work for Rare! Sadness abounded, but the clean-hair quotient of the office rose sharply.

## October 2000

The *Turok* legacy ran rapidly downhill as we reviewed *Turok 3*, which was a sad echo of past glories and thoroughly overshadowed by the all-conquering brilliance of *Perfect Dark*.




## November 2000

Mark Green travelled to Japan for Nintendo's (then) annual Spaceworld show. And what did he see? Gamecube unveiled for the first time, with choice footage of *Wave Race, Metroid, Zelda, Rogue Squadron II* and Joanna Dark (ah, hindsight, eh?). He also got a first play of the GBA. He was so excited he was jabbering like a puppy for weeks after he got back.

## Christmas 2000

Issue 49, while not as jam-packed with goodness as the previous year's Christmas issue, still managed to play host to two solid gold winners: *The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask* and *The World Is Not Enough*. The former game sensibly monkeyed around with the formula established so astonishingly in *Ocarina of Time*, and its looping three-day setting offered curiously emotional gameplay as you got to know the doomed inhabitants of Clock Town. *TWINE*, meanwhile, succeeded admirably in emulating *GoldenEye*'s Bond thrills, although it couldn't match Rare's game and *Perfect Dark* for sheer excellence.

## April 2001

The N64 was nearing the end of its remarkable lifespan, but there were a few classics left in the old girl yet. One such bright spot was *Conker's Bad Fur Day*, on which we dished out a pleasing 89%. Starting life as a saccharine-sweet platformer, Rare literally did an about-turn on the game and the result was filled with swearing, gratuitously violent film homages, and weeing. Plus a boss made of poo. Hard to believe, but all too true.

## May 2001

It'd been a couple of Rare-tastic months all told, and the Warwickshire wonders said goodbye to the N64 with *Banjo-Tooie*, a sprawling, beautiful, horribly-named sequel to *Banjo-Kazooie*. Sadly, its similarity to its predecessor, plus the advances made by *Donkey Kong 64* and *Conker's Bad Fur Day*, meant that it netted 'only' 81% from Greener, who speculated thusly: "Here's hoping the Tooie team relocate their ingenuity for Gamecube." Oops!

## July 2001

The GBA landed in the UK! To commemorate Nintendo's continuing domination of the handheld market, issue 56 saw all the UK launch games reviewed, and not even the rubbish-in-hindsight dark-but-reflective GBA screen could dent our excitement. Even *Rayman Advance* was awarded 4/5 for flip's sake.

2001's E3 show was also covered, and it managed to be the most exciting expo ever (apart from the latest one, of course, showing us Wii properly for the first time), and to prove it we took an exhaustive look at everything that was shown for the soon-to-be-released Gamecube. Criminy! It was like every Christmas at once – *Smash Bros Melee, Luigi's Mansion, Pikmin, Wave Race: Blue Storm, Rogue Leader, Metroid Prime* and more, all playable for the first time.

And! The amazing but horribly delayed *Excitebike 64* finally made it to PAL shores, earning itself 90%. Quite the exciting month, at the end of which Bally had had enough, leaving Greener to look after the mag 'til the next editor arrived.

# RETROSPECTIVE

"This is – literally – a load of old rubbish"

▷ *Timesplitters 2* was the best thing since *Perfect Dark*.

△ Kittsy gets to the guts of a GBA.

Bicksy and Shigsy at ECTS 2001. The Motester let loose the hounds shortly after this pic was taken.

△ *Mario Sunshine*. Simply lovely.

△ Martin liked the green-hatted Irish Pikachu best.

△ We couldn't believe our eyes. Look at it!

△ What wonders will *Mario* deliver on Wii?




## November 2001

The new editor arrived in style, in the shape of the returning Tim Weaver. Issue 60 also saw N64 transmute into the **NGC** Magazine we know and love today, in anticipation of the UK launch of Gamecube. Sadly, all this change was too much for Steve 'Extreme' Jalim, **NGC**'s production editor, who left by base-jumping off Clifton Suspension Bridge.

## December 2001

Excitement in the **NGC** office reached fever pitch with the delivery of a Japanese Gamecube – issue 61 saw import reviews of *Luigi's Mansion*, *Wave Race: Blue Storm* and *Super Monkey Ball*, amidst much fainting and near-sexual arousal in Geraint. There was also a review of *Advance Wars* on the GBA which, along with all those lovely Gamecube games, threatened to stop office work altogether. The next few months saw more reviews of import games, until…

## March 2002

…Gamecube launched in the UK! Issue 67 of **NGC** (confusingly, the May issue – the magazine world is a strange one) featured proper PAL reviews of all the launch games. Perhaps giving *Luigi's Mansion* 90% was a mistake – it just seems so *quaint* nowadays – but we were spot on with a 24% drubbing of *Universal Studios*. Greener succinctly said "this is – literally – a load of old rubbish."

## June 2002

Issue 68 was the first issue of the new, improved, redesigned **NGC**. And it was enormous – so wide that we had complaints that humble Earth letterboxes just wouldn't accommodate it. But it was stuffed to the gunwales with heart-stopping Nintendo excitement: a covermounted DVD, reviews of the awesome *Super Smash Bros Melee* and *Rogue Leader* and, of course, the introduction of Lex Luthor's Solve My Maze which, to our surprise when researching this feature, actually had a solution. (Readers, if you entered Solve My Maze between issues 73 and 78, there was no solution. Although, admittedly, you could probably have gleaned this as they made no sense whatsoever. What fun we had!)

## August 2002

Issue 70 offered more DVD thrills and spills, complete with footage from *Wind Waker*, *Super Mario Sunshine* and *Metroid Prime*. Elsewhere, *James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire* failed to live up to *GoldenEye* and – oh, how EA must hate the G word – Geraint starred in a four-page photo-comic called 'Life's A Game', which ended with him shooting Tim in the nipple. A slow news month, to be sure.

## September 2002

The world's first import review of *Super Mario Sunshine* uncovered a game of tropical brilliance that offered a continuation of what Nintendo had achieved with *Super Mario 64*, rather then a revolution. It was well worth the 96% we awarded it, though.

We also experienced one of Gamecube's biggest surprises – the ages-in-development *Eternal Darkness* proved to be a thing of dread wonder, with a brilliant story, a magnificent magic system, a superbly atmospheric insanity system and 12 – count 'em – characters to play as. Lovely.

## October 2002

*WWW Wrestlemania X8* on the cover? Surely shome mishtake! Especially with a first review of *Resident Evil* and, er, *Eggo Mania* tucked elsewhere in the mag. *Eggo Mania* actually deserves mention as the publishers wouldn't send us the game's box art. Soooo, we drew our own. Check out issue 72, page 67. Got a couple of angry phone calls about *that*, we can tell you.

## November 2002

And so, for the second time, Tim left the mag, his work complete. Jes Bickham stepped in as editor from issue 73, and his inaugural issue sported PAL reviews of *Mario Sunshine*, the sublime *Timesplitters 2* (complete with instructions on how to recreate

How could anyone not love this? The Wind Waker heralded a splendid new visual style for Zelda.

△ Dan Geary, in all his glory, to be sure and so on and so forth.

△ Sailing the high seas with Link.

◁ Enjiki took over from Worldy Bloke when we became NGC.

△ One of our favourite ladies. We're not worthy!

△ *Wave Race: Blue Storm*. Look at the water! Lovely.

*GoldenEye*'s Bunker map with the included level editor!), and the underwhelming *Turok Evolution*. It was better than *Turok 3*, but was still continuing our hero's downward slide.

Special mention must go to Geraint's excoriating review of *Mickey's Magical Mirror*, which was "so inexorably tedious that you can feel your beard-hair going grey". Excellent. Also includes the immortal phrase "smell my three fat fingers."

## December 2002

Ooh, the controversy. Rare were bought out by Microsoft, moving development to the Xbox, and their first, last and only Gamecube game – the dull *Starfox Adventures* – got a not-bad 72% in ish 74. Naturally, everyone thought we were putting the boot in due to sour grapes. Very silly indeed. If we were putting the boot in, we could have given it 56%. See?

The wonder that is *Animal Crossing* got its first unveiling, as Martin reviewed it in an explosion of ecstasy and also wrote a jolly amusing diary of his time in the anthropomorphic village, culminating in posting a contract on production editor Dan Geary's life on the town notice board. Mint.

Towards the back of the mag, Lex Luthor took a break and was covered for by Captain Black's Everyone Will Die (explained by the fact that we had a Captain Black doll in the office that actually said, terrifyingly, "everyone will die").

## January 2003

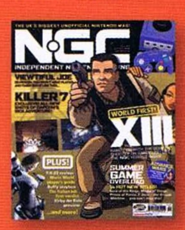
*Metroid Prime* had a long and troubled history, with developers Retro Studios canning all their other projects to concentrate on it, and Nintendo themselves swooping in to give them a helping hand. However, our review of the US version of the game in issue 76 proved it to be a thing of untrammelled incredibleness (is that a word?). Elsewhere, an expanded feature on *Timesplitters 2*'s mapmaker function showed you how to make not only *GoldenEye*'s Bunker level (again), but also Facility, Archives, and *Perfect Dark*'s Grid. Swank.

## May 2003

Issue 80 lost a little width, perhaps sensibly, but remained as stuffed full of juicy Ninty goodness as always, including a review of the superb *Burnout 2* (90%, fact fans). Paul Edwards' infamous Sense Talks reached an all-time middle with this little snippet about 'tools': "no man is a real man until he owns his own axe".

## June 2003

Internet whingers worldwide were silenced when *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* proved to be, while not without its faults, pretty damn cracking indeed. We gave it 97% and those expressionistic cel-shaded visuals turned out to be the best thing to happen to Link's adventures since, well, *Ocarina of Time*. Also in this issue was a review of *Enter The Matrix* (73%) and, in our Directory section's 'Top Fives', we predicted the top five songs that Johnny Cash would cover on his next album, including Baby Got Back. Elsewhere, 3DO head honcho Trip Hawkins said "I have always felt that great games need to be simple, hot and deep." Cough, splutter, etc.




## July 2003

LA's journo-expo-game-o-tastic E3 show rolled around once again and game fever reached critical mass as fantabulous games like *Metal Gear Solid*, *Mario Kart: Double Dash*, *Metroid Prime 2*, *Rogue Squadron III*, *Pikmin 2*, *Advance Wars 2* and an awful lot more made their presences known.

*Hitman 2* was reviewed in issue 82, proving to be a peculiarly Nintendo-esque freeform game, albeit one about assassination. Martin loved it (91%) and, on page 42, spelt out '**NGC**' with the corpses of the recently departed. He still chuckles about it to this day, in fact. We also hilariously depicted David Gosen, Nintendo of Europe's Managing Director of the day, as a homicidal robot. But, y'know, it was meant affectionately.

A legend was born at E3 2004 when Reggie kicked some ass and took some names. He's 23 feet tall.

△ The best *Mario Kart* ever made.

◁ *Mario Kart* went online for the first time with the DS.

▷ Greener doesn't handle stress well.

△ We're not sure we like the wacky hoover kart...

△ Peach. Not our fave *MK* racer.

△ The best game on Gamecube? We certainly think so.




## October 2003

Squeaky-headed funster Bickham left **NGC** in issue 84, replaced by old boy Marcus Hawkins of Super Play and Total! fame. Issue 85 sported a big fat going over of *Soul Calibur 2*, which is the best beat-'em-up ever and something that still gets played at lunchtimes to this day. Also, the Japanese version of *F-Zero GX* got 92% from Geraint.

## Christmas 2003

Although, in hindsight, some of Team **NGC** had reservations about *Mario Kart Double Dash*'s two-characters-per-kart gimmick, it proved to be the perfect Christmas present for 2003, scoring 93% in issue 88 and offering many marathon gaming sessions that threatened mag production in a terminal capacity. It's fast, it's great-looking, and in Yoshi Circuit it's got one of the very best *Mario Kart* tracks ever. Shame that Rainbow Road was an inevitable disappointment, though.

*Rogue Squadron III* fared less well, though, due to the inclusion of rubbish on-foot bits, which are not what *Rogue Squadron* is all about. But the advent of fine multiplayer modes – including the entirety of *Rogue Leader* presented as a two-player co-op affair – more than made up for its languors.

## January 2004

Issue 89's sprawling 2004 preview proved that there was plenty of life left in the Gamecube yet, with upcoming classics like *Killer 7*, *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes*, *Resident Evil 4* and *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* leading the charge.

The long-in-development *1080: Avalanche* scored a justified 90%, offering brilliant snow-based racing that built on the N64 classic with aplomb.

## July 2004

Issue 95 saw coverage of 2004's E3 show, with the DS finally revealed, to much oohing and aaahing, not least because the games shown for it – including *Mario Kart DS*, *Metroid Prime Hunters* and *Super Mario 64 DS* – knocked our socks off.

But perhaps the biggest news was the big reveal of *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess*. This return to a more 'realistic' *Zelda* was so well received that Martin witnessed a plump American journo falling to his knees and weeping. Possibly apocryphal, that, but we'd like to believe it. Also, this was the moment where Reginald Fils-Aime became a bona-fide celebrity due to these eight immortal words: "I'm about kicking ass, I'm about taking names". Whadda guy.

## August 2004

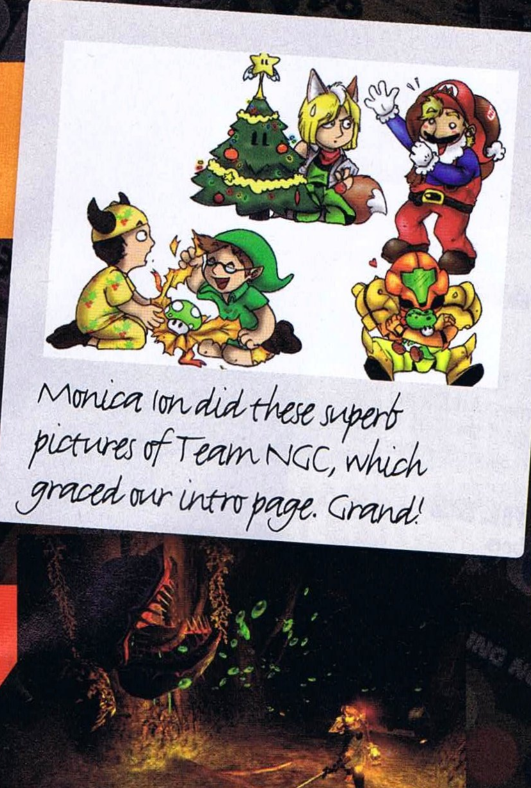
Superhero games came of age with the advent of *Spider-Man*, which was notable mainly for its breathtakingly atmospheric web-slinging through a sprawling New York City. Paul's Sense Talks continued unabated: "Did you know that the human small intestine, if straightened out and measured with a ruler, would no longer work properly." Genius or idiot? We asked ourselves that question every day for years.

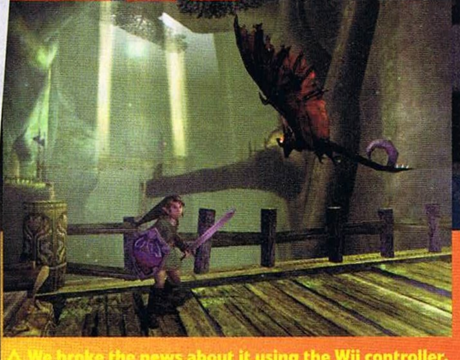
## December 2004

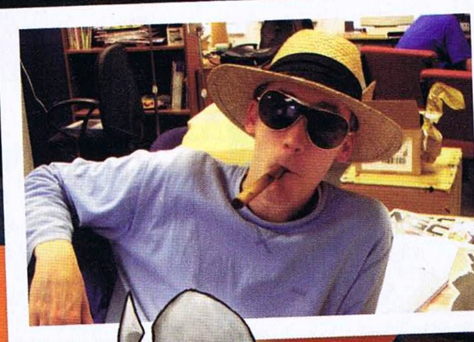
Issue 100! To celebrate this milestone we got an exclusive hands-on playtest of the sky-slicingly superb *Resident Evil 4*, and took a trip down memory lane (a little like this, in fact) in our '**NGC** Is 100' feature, where Martin managed to unearth some astonishingly embarrassing pictures of erstwhile prod ed Steve Jalim. Page 89, if you fancy a laugh.

## Christmas 2004

A double whammy of first-person fun here, with reviews of both *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* and *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*. The former proved to be as dispiriting as we had suspected – a Bond game without Bond in it, and an utterly shameless appropriation of the name of Rare's timeless classic. *Echoes* fared better, being a denser, slightly more unfriendly take on *Prime*'s exploration-heavy wonder; it got 94%. For all the lay-deez in the house, we also showed Paul sporting a smashing strawberry blonde thatch. Classy. And very manly.

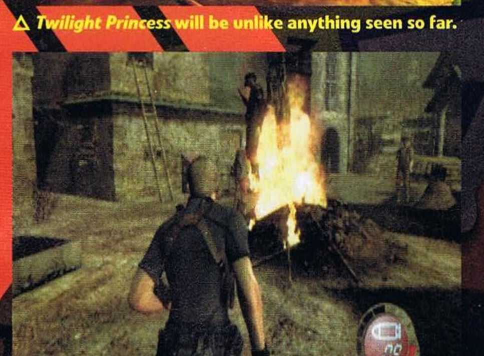

Monica Ion did these superb pictures of Team NGC, which graced our intro page. Grand!


△ We broke the news about it using the Wii controller.


△ Sheesh.


△ *Twilight Princess* will be unlike anything seen so far.

△ If you're in a tight spot, punch Iwazaru in the face.


△ More fun than *actually* shooting a zombie.


△ We. Can't. Wait. Any. Longer!

## January 2005
We got a taste of things to come when we got our mitts on a Japanese DS and all the Japanese launch games: the future had arrived, and was more fun than a rubber sack full of butter.

## March 2005
The big one! We reviewed *Resident Evil 4* and proclaimed it to be the best game on Gamecube – no mean feat, given the quality of *Wind Waker, Smash Bros, Metroid Prime, Super Mario Sunshine* et al. Leon Kennedy guest edited the issue, due to Mr Hawkins moving on to do something with digital cameras, and hosted a marvellously entertaining letters section.




## April 2005
Little Tom East moved into the editor's chair with issue 105, although he was beaten to the punch by yet another guest editor, this time the woefully cretinous Slippy Toad, in honour of the underwhelming *Starfox Assault* getting a review (73%, if you're interested).

Elsewhere, *Timesplitters Future Perfect* scored a natty 88%, and the DS finally got its UK release, accompanied by much cheering, banner-waving, and, indeed, hooplah.

## August 2005
Issue 109 saw Capcom's unsettling *Killer 7* get a review (84%). After completing it, Geraint needed a lie down and a cup of leek broth.

## Christmas 2005
The DS went from strength to strength as *Mario Kart DS* hit the UK – we love it to bits, obviously, and if you'd told us when we were N64 Magazine that one day we'd be playing *Mario Kart* online over a handheld, we'd have burnt you as a witch. It's absolutely brilliant. Unless you're a filthy snaker, of course. We don't hold with that around here, you know.

## January 2006
As well as doffing *Animal Crossing: Wild World* with a 92% cap, we made waves worldwide by proudly announcing the news that *Zelda: Twilight Princess* will be playable on Wii. Cue much moaning from little websites about us making stuff up – only for Shigsy himself to confirm it all at his recent London visit. See? A little faith, a little trust, people. That's all that's required.

## A NEW BEGINNING...
**And so here we are, at the end of the road. Except it's not the end of the road; it's the start of an exciting new chapter in the life of NGC Magazine. With the arrival of Wii and the continued ascent of the brilliant DS, we thought it was only prudent that we reinvent ourself in the same way as Nintendo. It's time for a change, and that means a bigger, better magazine that's committed to bringing you the very best of Nintendo each and every month. So don't go away – we've only just begun...**

...SEE YOU NEXT MONTH!

# CONGRATULATIONS!

You've unlocked this mag's bonus cheats page!
Please enjoy these cheats on the house:

### NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED
**Unlock the Porsche Cayman**
At the 'Press Start' screen, press L1, R1, R1, R1, →, ←, →, ↓

### GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES
**Pedestrians Attack You**
L1, L1, R1, L1, L1, R1, ↑, △

### ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD
**Visit Tom Nook's home**
Go to the back of Tom Nook's shop between 12:00 and 2:00 p.m. Use a shovel to hit the back wall three times, then hit the front entrance once to be able to enter and see Tom Nook in pyjamas with a teddy bear.

### THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE
**Level select**
At the Wardrobe level selection screen, hold L1 and press ↑, ↑, →, →, ↑, →, ↓. Repeat the code to disable its effect.

### POKÉMON EMERALD
**Mew**
Acquire the Old Sea Chart, and go to Faraway Island.

### ONIMUSHA: DAWN OF DREAMS
**Alternative costumes**
Successfully complete the Test Of Valour to unlock alternative costumes. Additional costumes will be unlocked if the Test Of Valour is completed with all Gold ranks.

### RESIDENT EVIL DS
**Play as Rebecca Chambers**
Complete Rebirth Mode as Chris

### THE RUB RABBITS!
**Snowball chase time attack**
Beat Scene23

### PAC-MAN WORLD 3
**Unlock all levels and mazes**
At the main menu, quickly press ←, →, ←, →, B, ↑ to unlock levels and mazes

### VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE
**Play as Movie Fan Joe**
Complete the Captain Blue Begins Special Edition chapter in Story mode.

## FOR 20,377 MORE CHEATS, TIPS AND SOLUTIONS

FOR PS2, XBOX, GAMECUBE, PSP, GAME BOY ADVANCE, NINTENDO DS AND XBOX 360 YOU NEED:













# ON SALE NOW!

From the makers of...



**OUR PROMISE**

Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

# REVIEWS

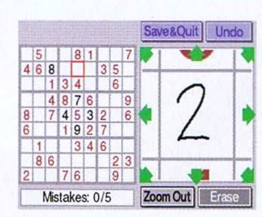


## HARVEST MOON: MAGICAL MELODY

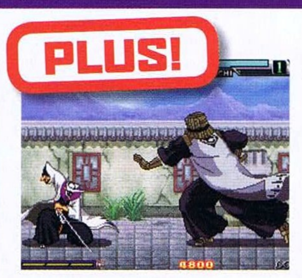
Life down on the farm isn't all manure-spreading and bovine fundament-fondling, you know. Say hello to one of the most charming – and gruelling – games we've played in a long old time. It'll give you a new appreciation of the rural life... P22

## DR KAWASHIMA'S BRAIN TRAINING

Unbelievably, education made fun. We'd be suspicious if it wasn't so good. P40



## PLUS!





## OUR SCORING SYSTEM

**0-24**
Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured this game is absolute crud.

**25-49**
A disappointing title, stashed with nasty faults and likely to be short on any quality.

**50-74**
Some great bits, some not-so great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

**75-89**
Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

**90+**
Rarely awarded, a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence.

NGC STAR GAME

## MEET THE NGC TEAM

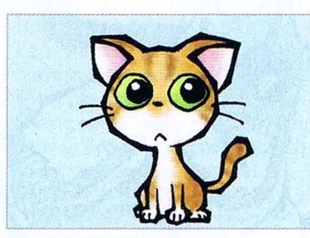
Farming! The profession of kings. Or farmers. What kind of farmers are we?



**MARTIN**
*"It's a cruel life, on the farm. I suckle the animals on my own teats, then turn them into burgers. The wheel of life turns."*



**ALEX**
*"I must hurry to the hayloft – O straw-filled chamber of love. And sweet Daisy! I peek as she pulls the udders."*



**GREENER**
*"The animals flock to me, as I am one of their own, a kindred spirit, roaming free. I poo where I may, as nature intended."*



**JES**
*"I plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land. The bad seed I plant on the Evil Farm, down the road."*

**The village people** go back to their roots but is this Moon relaxing or waning?

# Harvest Moon: Magical Melody

NGC STAR GAME

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| **PUBLISHER** | RISING STAR |
| **DEVELOPER** | NATSUME |
| **RELEASE DATE** | NOW (US) |
| **PLAYERS** | 1-4 |
| **MEM CARD PAGES** | 57 |
| **GBA LINK-UP** | NO |
| **SURROUND SOUND** | NO |
| **WIDESCREEN** | NO |
| **COST** | $40 (£23) |

Weird Dish
... is done!

△ **You make it, you have to eat it! And watch the results come straight back up again in a glorious panoply of primary colours.**

# HARVEST MOON: MAGICAL MELODY

There really aren't enough days in the hour

### SOWING AND REAPING

*You won't get anywhere without turning every possible bit of spare land into fertile veggie beds. Digging in certain patterns (but, erm, not this one) gives maximum watering can efficiency.*



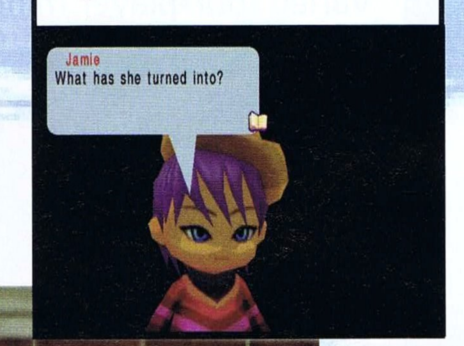
### DUCKING AND DIVING

*If you can't make enough money from your own land, you're a complete loser. Oh, but you might just be able to get by on the old bits of rubbish you find washed up on the sea shore.*



### MEETING AND GREETING

*It's like Animal Crossing with added hard work. The more you talk to characters, the more likely they'll be to help you on your life journey. Not Jamie, though. He/she is plain mean.*




△ For some reason the late former soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev appears to have moved into the village.

# JETHRO DULL

Surprisingly for a game that thrives on being a wholly solo experience, a number of varied four-player minigames have been bundled into the agricultural experience.




△ The games are varied in style, and also hugely variable in quality. They mostly stem from one of the village's "definitely-not-a-rave" festivals.




△ If you need something to prevent you from sleep and keep you occupied counting sheep, dogs and primary-coloured blocks, welcome.




△ Making different products attracts different people, so be creative.

Anyone who strolls past as you play *Magical Melody* or even lingers for five minutes always assumes that life is simple down on this farm. The gurgling of the fish-filled stream lulls them, the gentle plinky-plonking of the music deceives them and the slow pace of life lies to them, and soon they start to believe that your existence in the country is all wonder, watering, weeding and wooing. But it isn't, for each farm and every home is built on pain, suffering and damn hard work.

Take a look under your hero's hands, because that isn't soil under the nails, it's dried blood. See those lush crops thriving in the oh-so-green fields? They are watered with bitter tears shed from tired eyes. And look at those innocent lambs gambolling so playfully in amid the hay bales – they have been nurtured by pain itself. For life in the superb but cruel *Song of Happiness* is a constant battle, to keep your animal fit, to keep the plants growing, to keep your stomach full and to keep your mind from wandering onto the idea of playing something… fun, with, like, guns and stuff.

"LOOK AT HIS HANDS – IT ISN'T SOIL UNDER HIS NAILS, IT'S DRIED BLOOD"

Because for *Magical Melody* Natsume have returned to the same seed as the original SNES game in both the sparse visual style, the lowly starting point, the quiet village and the pedestrian pace of life. Your hero or heroine first arrives in town as a blank anime template, ready to have a name, gender and home picked for it, ready to begin scratching out a lonely hand-to-mouth living




Δ Some of the characters don't have much to define them. Doesn't stop them scrounging for pressies though.




Δ Befriend the dolphin, and he might take you to his special island for a spot of fishing.




Δ You can compare yourself to Jamie's well established farm. But only if you want to make yourself feel like faecal matter.







Δ Dropping litter actually detracts from your happiness.

Δ Outbuildings like this coop cost serious money and use lots of wood.

in the bare soil – all in direct contrast to the visual opulence, wealthy beginnings, slightly sickly storytelling and whirling social scene of *A Wonderful Life*.

Your life on the land begins when you take possession of a pauper's shack no bigger than a shed. And whichever location you choose, be it road-side, riverside or seaside, all you have is a weed-ridden, rock-dotted patch of scrub waiting to be turned into a fertile, viable farm. This curiously compelling task will fill every waking hour of your farmer's life, and several months of your own in real time, for with the light and our hero constantly fading, there really aren't enough days in the hour.

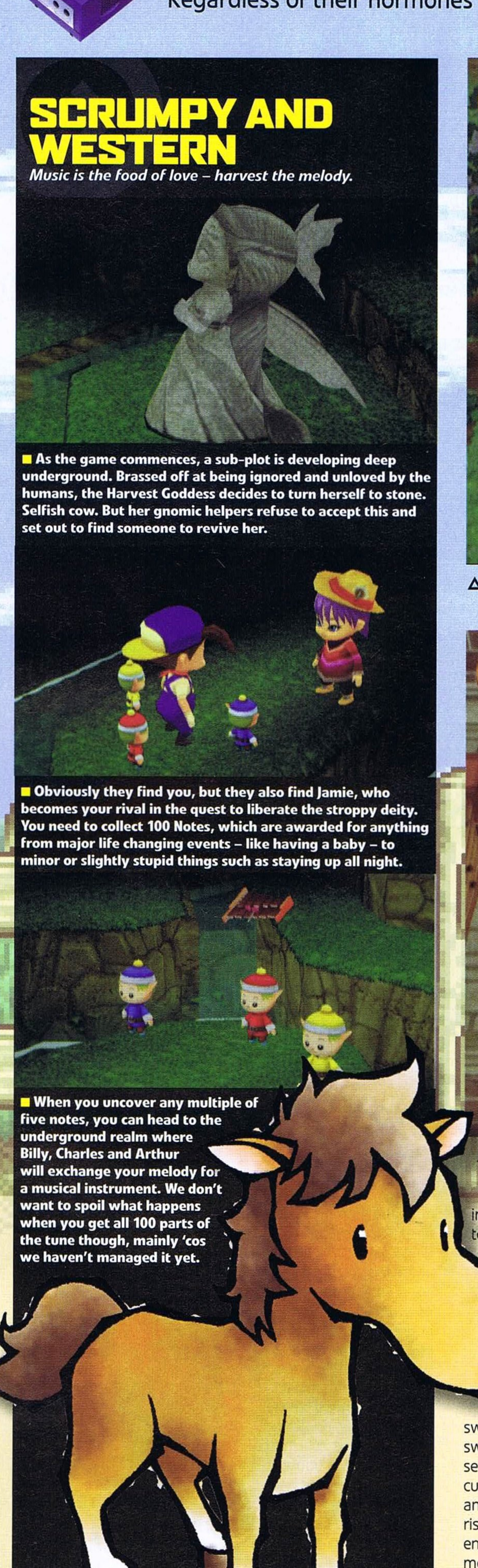


## SACK IT

***Naturally, you've got a backpack to carry things in, but it's pitifully small (only five slots for hoes, watering cans, etc), meaning you'll need plenty of trips home to swap stuff around. Make it a priority to get your hands on a bigger bag sharpish…***

Your beginnings in this town are humble and they stay that way for quite some time, for two hefty restrictions have been imposed on your agricultural progress: a tiny rucksack and a quickly depleted energy bar. And while the former inconvenience forces you to make endless short journeys just to collect fresh seed, plough the fields or fish, it is the later that really stymies your social life. Without eating about three or four meals a day, our hero is only able to chop up one tree stump or water a single field of crops before he collapses in exhaustion and spends the night in the town clinic. And if you want to break up a large boulder? Well, that can feel more like a life sentence.

So the search for food becomes a constant quest, even to the extent of forcing you to eat solely so you can carry on searching for more nourishment. As a result, you can rarely wander that far from the fridge without dedicating days to preparing packed lunches or risking slipping behind your rapacious rival in the need to fill your quota of plant produce. Your only break from the constant demands of the dirt comes at one of the monthly festivals, which – just to rub your nose



# SCRUMPY AND WESTERN

*Music is the food of love – harvest the melody.*

**As the game commences, a sub-plot is developing deep underground. Brassed off at being ignored and unloved by the humans, the Harvest Goddess decides to turn herself to stone. Selfish cow. But her gnomic helpers refuse to accept this and set out to find someone to revive her.**

**Obviously they find you, but they also find Jamie, who becomes your rival in the quest to liberate the stroppy deity. You need to collect 100 Notes, which are awarded for anything from major life changing events – like having a baby – to minor or slightly stupid things such as staying up all night.**

**When you uncover any multiple of five notes, you can head to the underground realm where Billy, Charles and Arthur will exchange your melody for a musical instrument. We don't want to spoil what happens when you get all 100 parts of the tune though, mainly 'cos we haven't managed it yet.**




**△ How you play reflects who you are. Alex was methodical. Jes did more flirting than farming.**




**△ Breaking into a girl's house and reading her diary is a sure way to win her heart.**

in it – you'll probably be too poor to be allowed to join. All of which can make life a slog: a painful, repetitive slog that starts to chip away at your desire to play.

But your Sisyphean struggle only makes your eventual success taste even sweeter – especially if you've picked sweet potatoes, sugar snaps and sweet peas from the list of 30 or so seeds. Soon money abounds, your cupboard is full, your pockets bulge and your diet no longer sees you risking scurvy. Finally, finally you can enjoy life in the town rather than merely existing on its fringes. And once again, that is where *Harvest Moon* finds its beating heart and its (surprisingly) throbbing genitals. The previous quiet conurbation of Flower Bud Village flourishes with friendly life, involving you in everything from the community-building festivals to the quest to find and flirt with ten eligible but slightly generic young'uns of both genders, in a hopeful attempt to sow your wild oats.

And while your primary urge and aim remains the same as an owl's – to whit to woo – there is also a reason to befriend the other village people regardless of their hormones. Each resident, and even the wild animals, has been given a birthday, a personality and a list of likes and dislikes.



## LISTMANIA

***Rather handily, Magical Melody keeps track of absolutely everything you've done in the game, so if you ever want to know how many turnips you've harvested, you can. Which is particularly good if you're a farming statto.***

# FARM FROM HEAVEN

Creating your own home on the range isn't an easy business and neither the manual nor the other farmers will help you out, so trial and error rules your days.



*With no real clue as to what you're meant to be doing, you're as helpless as a penguin on an escalator. Your patch of land needs to be cleared of rocks, weeds and grass before you can plant anything, which means a few days' graft with the hammer, axe and hoe to prepare the soil.*



*Once the soil is ready, you need to plant your selected seeds. While some people prefer rows of crops, the seeds are actually scattered in a nine by nine square grid, which makes the formation more efficient – especially since this way you can water the middle square.*



*Welcome to the rest of your life. With the plants in the soil, watering becomes a daily and draining task, except on the days it rains. Honestly, you will find yourself praying for rain simply to break the tedium. That or the end of the hosepipe ban.*



*After days of struggle with the elements, all your hard work finally bears fruit, or veg, and you are faced with a dilemma. Do you fill your larder and live off this crop for the next few days, using the time to visit people? Or do you just go for the money and start all over again?*

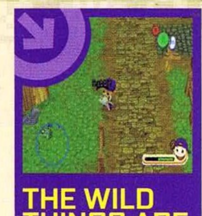



△ **Sick chickens? Burn them? Burn them all! Attack! Charge!**

Sating these needs also allows the town to grow, so the more green produce you produce and the more happiness you spread, the more this collection of shabby huts swells to include cake stalls, inns, pottery shops and orchards.

And in turn their progress also aids yours – a successful blacksmith will improve your tool technology for half the price of the junkshop, while good relations with the mayor will make extra land and eventually even marriage easier. All of which provides a very direct, obvious and tangible reward for your toil and trouble.

And if the prospect of love, propagation and procreation doesn't inspire you to persist,



**THE WILD THINGS ARE**

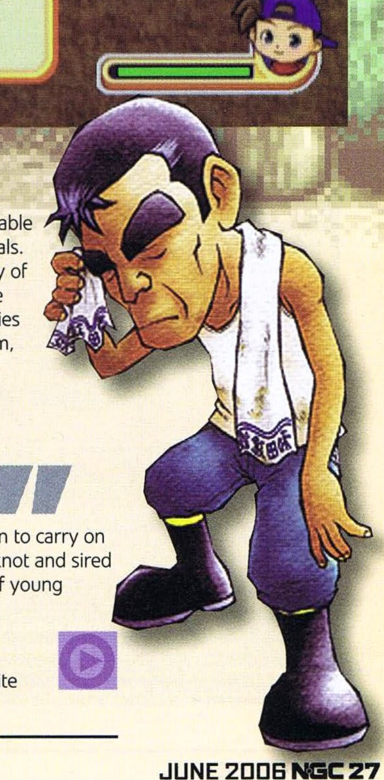
***One of the many millions of things you can do in Magical Melody is pet the huge variety of wildlife that roams free around Flower Bud village. Just pick 'em up every day, see the hearts appear, and your job is done.***

*Magical Melody* adds another quest: the search for the titular tune. Spread throughout the world there are 100 notes which, once they have all been collected, will form the music to liberate the Harvest

**"IT GIVES YOU A REASON TO CARRY ON ONCE YOU'VE TIED THE KNOT"**

Goddess from her statue-like state. It is a neat little mechanic too, for by rewarding every act from accidentally passing out to pushing out a child, you are shunted into exploring new elements that may have been previously ignored, such as the varied and variable minigames and festivals. And, most importantly of all, it solves one of the problems that the series has long suffered from, by giving you a reason to carry on once you've tied the knot and sired the next generation of young farmers.

But not all of the departures from *A Wonderful Life* are quite



"Primary-hued abandon"



# CIDER SPACE

*Success breeds success in farming, meaning more crops mean more cash, which means more technology, which means more crops. But, you have to start somewhere…*



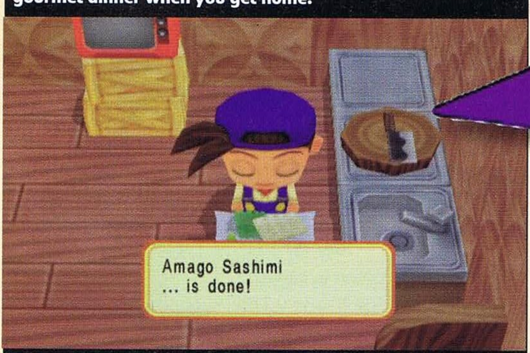

■ Needing over 40,000 calories just to survive the gardening, our hero has to consume his own weight in Ploughman's Lunches every three hours, or risk losing a whole day passed out. The only other option is bed at 10:30 in the morning.




■ With even the simplest produce in the shops costing almost an entire day's wages, the best solution to your hunger pangs is to find free food in the rivers and hedgerows around town. What can be caught or discovered changes with the seasons.




■ Almost any vegetable that you grow can be eaten raw at any time, but the more complex the food, the more energy you will gain from it. So, foods are best combined into a tasty gourmet dinner when you get home.




■ Sadly your hovel doesn't come with a cooker, so most of your early meals will involve raw ingredients. Which is no bad thing when it only takes a few moments and some deft knife work to create a quick dish of sashimi.




△ It's a slippery slope. Our hero next appears fishing butts out of a urinal. And talking to himself.



△ "Umm… yeah, thanks for that. Am I meant to milk it, ride it, eat it or…?"



## FISH-FOOD

*What kind of* Harvest Moon *would* Magical Melody *be without a bit of fishing? If you're low on health, you can immediately eat what you've caught, or else cast about for the biggest fish you can find. More relaxing than catching shopping trolleys in a canal.*

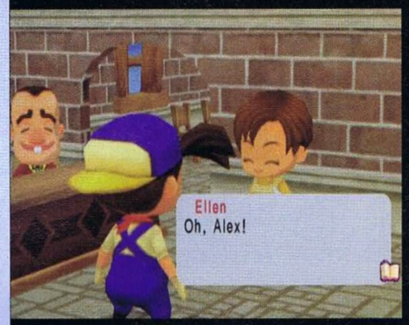
so neatly implemented. A shift in the control system means that it is now easier to shuffle between items and lock-on to certain plants and patches of earth, but this has also meant taking the camera off the C-stick and dropping it onto the D-Pad. As a result the view is inflexible, easily blocked and, even when fully zoomed out, far too close in to make navigating this densely populated town easy.

Reverting to the N64 game's chunky, somewhat simplistic graphical style is also a controversial move. For while veterans will obviously be delighted to see so many familiar faces rendered with such primary-hued abandon, the spartan designs,

There really aren't enough days in the hour

# GREEN FINGERS, BROWN NOSE

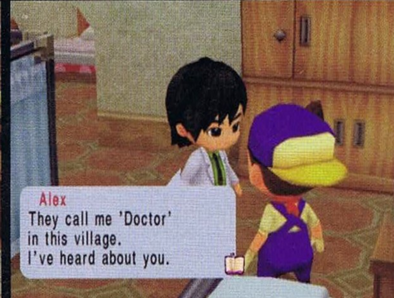
*It isn't just a matter of who you're going to tickle with your blue feather, because friendship matters too.*

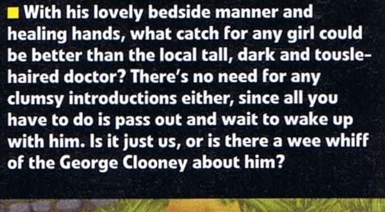



■ Ellen is so prim, proper and damn wholesome that you just have to imagine there is more to her than meets the eye. After spending her weekends working in the family shop, she then spends the rest of her time baking, reading improving books and counting the lucre generated from her webcam. Or not.



■ Nina is the winsome young thing who works in the local farm shop, selling a variety of functional items, like seeds and wholesome food stuffs, to horny-handed sons of the soil. She likes fresh flowers, tending delicate plants and petting lovely soft kittens. She also makes us sick, and we expect she's some sort of Mariah Carey fan.



■ With his lovely bedside manner and healing hands, what catch for any girl could be better than the local tall, dark and tousle-haired doctor? There's no need for any clumsy introductions either, since all you have to do is pass out and wait to wake up with him. Is it just us, or is there a wee whiff of the George Clooney about him?




■ She might be a horse-loving type of gal but our Gwen is down to earth and just a little bit punky at heart. An out of towner, she arrives to work at the Inn, thereby doubling the depth of the Flower Bud Village gene pool with just a swoosh of her pony tail. Beat her at the horse races to claim her heart.



■ Shall we just say that Bob is overcompensating for something and leave it at that? The lady doth protest too much… Hugely manly, always friendly, butch Bob is the man who comes around each morning and takes away all the heavy produce that you've lovingly grown. He also enjoys hanging around in caves, although we aren't sure why.




■ Jamie might be your agricultural rival in this village but that doesn't stop you being able to fall for his/her bisexual hermaphrodite charms. Yes, despite looking like a girl or perhaps a New Romantic, this slightly odd character can marry both men and women, and have kids too. Just imagine the surprise on the wedding night.



mild slowdown and sparse animations are hardly going to stun the less smitten. Too many days are spent watching the same meals being prepared, hearing the same musical loops, attending yet another festival where everyone stands completely still. A few new audio or visual rewards would really help to break the feeling that nothing has happened despite putting a full eight hour day in.

And yes, while that may be the point of this rootsy return to the game's distinctly retro feel, it does seem a little wilful to ignore the chance of making any *Moon* noobs give *Melody* a second look, not to mention the game's failure to give first timers a little more guidance on their inevitably poor gardening technique.

But persistence is one thing that *Magical Melody* does reward – both materially and spiritually. For this is a town and a world that is yours to shape, yours to play with, at your own pace and for your own ends. So after all those weeks of hard grind, not only will your former hovel be extended, a barn raised, a stable created and the town's common land claimed, but your toil in the soil will also produce less tangible rewards – romance, friendship and joy – the things that will make the rest of your days in this endearing little village more than just *A Wonderful Life*.

**ALEX COOKE**

> **"YOUR TOIL IN THE SOIL PRODUCES ROMANCE, FRIENDSHIP AND JOY"**



**DULY NOTED**

*The musical notes you need to collect can spring from simply stumbling across them, or even from standing still for a certain amount of time. As such, there's a 'luck of the draw' element to getting them all, so try everything you can think of.*



- Absorbing and immense.
- Genuinely open-ended.
- Be a boy or a girl.



- A hard life particularly early on.
- Slow progress.
- Too-zoomed-in view.





**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**

**Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life**
**Ubisoft**
**NGC/91 91%**
A busy, bustling town with lovely views and more stories.



**7 VISUALS**
Designed to be retro and sweet but does lack a little shine.



**6 SOUNDS**
A small selection of songs that fade into the background. Luckily.

**8 MASTERY**
A few flaws, but is refined and quite well translated.

**9 LIFESPAN**
More rewarding and expansive than ever; still confusing to noobs.

**VERDICT**

**100% fibrous, organic play. Life is hard and you know it's doing you good, but that doesn't stop it hurting.**








Δ It's the equivalent of the show Blockbusters, two on one – except none of them are lonely students.




Δ You can play almost entirely via the cards, except for the need to block and move. It's definitely not "kakeru".

# BLEACH DS

## SOUTEN NI KAKERU UNMEI

**Drink deeply** for there is no childproof lid on it.



### INFO BURST

| | |
|---|---|
| PUBLISHER | SEGA |
| DEVELOPER | TREASURE |
| RELEASE DATE | NOW (JAP) |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| SAVE | ON CART |
| SINGLE CART LINK | YES |
| WI-FI | YES |
| MIC | NO |
| COST | £28 IMPORT |




Arms go up, arms come down. Arms go up, arms come down. Few things in this life give you the same warm feeling inside as watching the standard 2D cheering crowd and their two frames of animated celebration. For once you spot these stilted dolts in motion you know what will follow; side scrolling, re-scaling, flat but bright sprites battling it out with juggles, acrobatic impossibility and huge combos. Yes, from the moment the first frantic, hugely enjoyable but slightly chaotic battle of *Bleach* begins, you know that while the school is old, this class is definitely new.

Because while Treasure have embraced all the time-honoured elements of the often fiercely protected 2D fighting genre, there is more going on underneath the garish garnish of twin-level duels and explosive effects – for they've also added in a few new neat touches in the shape of Wi-Fi and stylus-activated special moves.

With each battle being played out on the top screen alone, the bottom one is home to a card-based system that allows you to deal from a deck of power-ups, as well as triggering your most powerful attacks – without resorting to memorising huge streams of button presses. Instead, you slide a sweat-lubricated finger from the standard array of attacks (light, medium and heavy) on the face buttons and dish out a number of quickly deployed (and recharged attacks) or opt for a heavyweight but slowly-charging energy-bar drainer.



### HARPIC ON

*Without being fluent in Japanese it's hard to say how true to the source Bleach's story is, but the visuals that accompany each plot twist stay extremely close to the Shonen Jump anime in style. However, we do know that while Ichigo's story lasts 20 battles, others only go on for four. Luckily, the Time Attack and Arcade Mode are bigger and easily followed.*

And whatever the complexities (and the constant need for a screen-cleaning cloth) of this method, it instantly levels the playing field and lends a depth and subtlety to the fighting. Now the elaborate and all powerful moves have to be earned, rather than learned, which serves to encourage amateur gamers as well as rewarding pros, who can still craft chains and combos.

Of course, some of these refinements are lost in the Wi-Fi and wireless play simply because of the demands of including four fighters on screen. So, while the solo mode is solid, the lag online can be fairly hefty, particularly when everyone decides to deploy their processor-hogging powers. While it doesn't really spoil the combat, anarchy reigns over



△ Leaping between parts of the level isn't an easy 'dodge-all' trick.




△ Extra cards can be bought, earnt and swapped, but you'll need to study Japanese to know which ones.




△ At full power the effects of special moves can be more dramatic and time consuming than a Tolkien epic.




## GETTING THE SLOWDOWN

Four players can be roped in via the net or download, and having so many fighters on screen does change the way you play. Characters like Uryu the archer suddenly come into their own as you can rain their fire down onto your foes, while the other player faces the other two. With this deft balance in the cast, everyone has their uses – even the cuddly stuffed lion Kon, although we aren't quite sure what it is yet. Stalking and ravaging Tigger plush toys, perhaps.

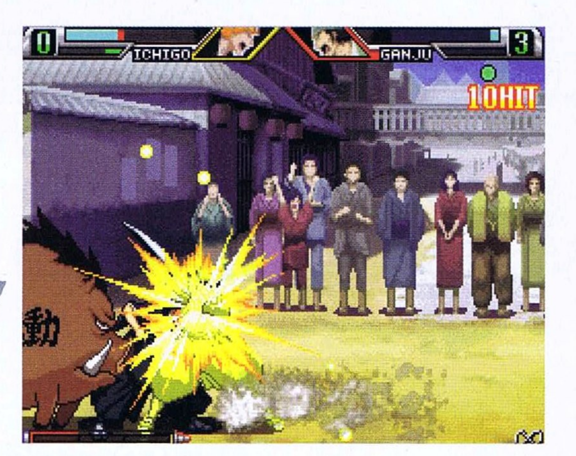
accuracy as mayhem takes hold.

However slowly things can go online, alone things remain crisp, quick and brightly defined. The controls are sharp, the sprites beautifully drawn and the characters balanced enough to force constant changes in tactics and moves. The only problem that may dog importers is the need to read some Japanese either to know which cards are on offer or to avoid getting trapped in the Story Mode – with its varying demands.

*Bleach* won't convince anyone who dislikes traditional beat'ems up that this is anything other than a standard 'middle of the street' fighter, but just look at these reasons to import it: the first non-terrible version of the anime, the first orthodox DS fighter and four player Wi-Fi. Arms go up!

**ALEX COOKE**

> **"ANARCHY REIGNS OVER ACCURACY AS THE MAHEM STARTS TO TAKE HOLD"**




△ "Don't just stand there, people – call a doctor! My head's just exploded and this warthog's horns are jabbing my-"

**+**

- Faithful to the original anime.
- Even with four players on screen, it's swift.

**–**

- Four minutes or more to dowload.
- Big power-ups can interrupt the flow.

**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**

**Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble**
Capcom
**NGC**/115 4/5
Less traditional but still extremely frantic and often very fast.

**8 VISUALS**
A world of zooming, leaping sprites that are fluidly animated.

**6 SOUNDS**
More widdling than a Steve Vai concert. Plus slightly repetitive voices.

**7 MASTERY**
Download play can be heavily delayed but the rest works very nicely.

**7 LIFESPAN**
The Story Mode is a bit skimpy but the multiplayer boasts much more.

**VERDICT**

While being mostly traditional in substance and style, its use of stylus and internet play makes the old feel pretty new.






[gr.]

Tom Clancy's
Splinter Cell
Chaos Theory™

# games on radar.

## your new PC game download site

*Download and play over 90 games all for a flat monthly fee*




**www.gamesonradar.com**





Coming soon: Peach uses the power of menopause



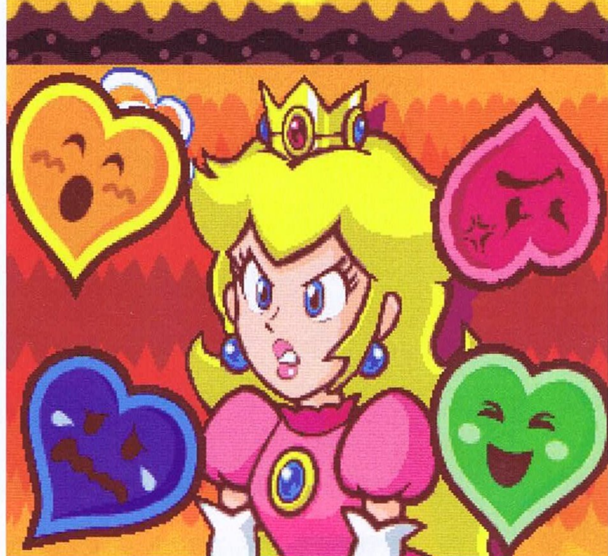
△ Peach fears physical sensation.



△ Can *your* tears grow plants?

△ Peach can 'fly' up to hidden bonus areas.





△ Hang on a sec – if she's been around for 22 years, first seen in her mid-twenties, she must be pushing 50 by now. No wonder she's angry…

# SUPER PRINCESS PEACH

## Cheer up darlin', it's only a game…

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| PUBLISHER | NINTENDO |
| DEVELOPER | NINTENDO |
| OUT | 26 MAY |
| PLAYERS | 1 |
| SAVE | ON CART |
| SINGLE-CART LINK | NO |
| WI-FI | NO |
| MIC | YES |
| COST | £30 |

Goombas are not meant to go through emotional turmoil. They shouldn't cry when they attack you, and you shouldn't wish you'd given them a cuddle instead of making orphans of their children. Even Peach (who's rescuing Mario for a change) in this 2D female-o-side-scroller, can't help seeping girl-fluids from her eyes every time she falls down a hole. Being over-sensitive isn't always a bad thing though, as she does get to reign triumphant using the mighty powers *of her emotions.*

Peach, like the average modern woman, has four stock emotions (or 'vibes') she can use: Joy to fly, Rage to start fires, Gloom to put them out, and Calm to restore HP. All of these are measured by a Vibe meter, which can be topped up by 'absorbing' her enemies using Perry, her humourless magical parasol pal.

**"YOU'LL FIND YOU HAVE RSI BUT ALSO AN UNEXPECTED SENSE OF SATISFACTION"**

Her emoti-powers are accessed via the touch screen, while the game plays on above. Initially awkward (the stylus is a no-no), you have to juggle fast-jabbing your thumbs at the screen to turn your emotions on and off, while still tapping the buttons to move and fight. Once you get used to it, you'll find you have RSI but also an unexpected sense of satisfaction.

Despite the "aren't girls emotional" cliché, the game is moreish, and having to keep your Vibe meter full is a fun addition to the platformerama. Although it's not massively challenging, *Princess Peach* is solid Ninty fare, littered with secret areas and a decent amount of mini-games that put the stylus and mic to good use, like blowing into the mic to make Toad skip-hop his way over enemies.

A lot of people will love this, because it is genuinely enjoyable, but we can't help feeling that after everything Peach has been through over the years, it's not enough. She should be picking up emotionally charged koopa troopas and tearing their tiny heads off, not blubbing and sighing into a magic umbrella.

**CHRISSY WILLIAMS**

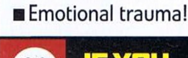




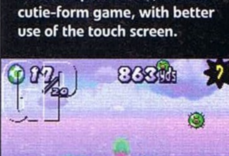
- Solid platforming.
- 'Vibes' work well.
- She doesn't get kidnapped.



- Bit too easy.
- Touch screen use is a little awkward.
- Emotional trauma!




**Yoshi's Touch and Go**
Nintendo
**NGC/107 80%**
A well implemented, moreish cutie-form game, with better use of the touch screen.






Adorable and bright, with realistic sobbing from all parties.

**7 SOUNDS**

Ol' reliable nintastic pop, but music extras aren't the best.

**7 MASTERY**

Tight overall, and emotion bashing works in the end.

**6 LIFESPAN**

Single-player only, but a fair amount of fun mini-games.

**VERDICT**

Quite straightforward but solid enjoyment – it's not just for girls who like crying, though they'll probably like it too.





















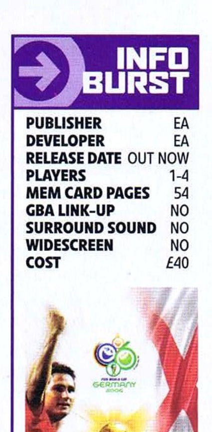


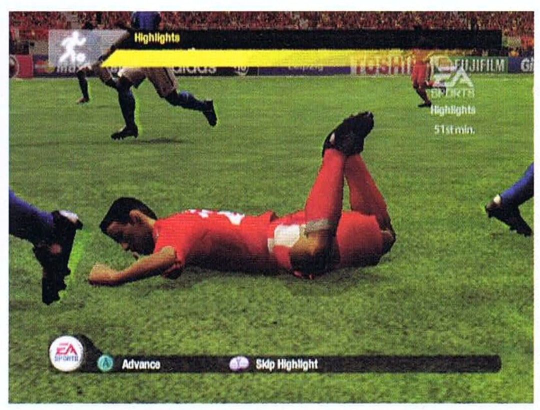

# 2006 FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY

**FIFA is still missing something** and it's not six inches of giraffe neck.

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| PUBLISHER | EA |
| DEVELOPER | EA |
| RELEASE DATE | OUT NOW |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| MEM CARD PAGES | 54 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |
| COST | £40 |






▲ **They call this yoga position 'The Worm' and it helps him relax during stressful matches. Ach, the poor little lamb.**

Peter Crouch isn't even tall. Which is not exactly a mistake that fills you with confidence for the rest of *2006 FIFA World Cup Germany*™. After all, if Electronic Arts haven't noticed that the 6' 7" tall Timmy from South Park lookalike takes an XXXL in scarves, what other details have they missed?

And the lolloping and lanky Liverpool striker isn't the only one to be missing something (apart from open goals, that is): Shaun Wright-Phillips' searing pace is absent, Ronaldinho's touch is merely average and David Beckham's passing is only as good as John Terry's hoofing. In fact, every player in *2006FWCG* is a clone. Not facially, although the limited number of facial polygons means that no one is particularly recognisable as themselves. No: every player is a clone in terms of their skill, size and pace. There are no personalities and no stars, just 22 robots.

Despite this still-present flaw inherited from *FIFA '06*, *2006FWCG* does manage to improve on last year's release in other areas. For while the play is still fluid and the passing crisp, the strikers are bolder in their runs and through-balls are more effective. And so the previously laboured matches are more open, interesting and compelling – but, at a cost. 'Sweet-spot' shooting leads to identikit goals, and flashy and flappy keepers who concede too many goals from fumbled ricochets

# 2006 FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY

Where men are only vaguely indistinguishable from robot clones



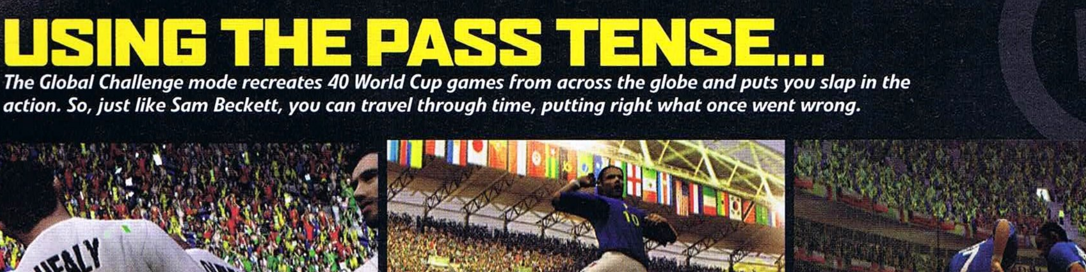

△ Everyone's ears are inside-out, much like a pack of flop-eared border collies.



△ Wayne sniffs out a lucrative spot of World Cup punditry. Damned metathingy.




△ The official FIFA magazine, with all the laughs you'd expect therein.



## USING THE PASS TENSE...

*The Global Challenge mode recreates 40 World Cup games from across the globe and puts you slap in the action. So, just like Sam Beckett, you can travel through time, putting right what once went wrong.*




**ULSTER SAYS YESSS! It's 1982 and Northern Ireland are 1-0 up against Spain. You need to hold on to that lead, or else score five more goals.**




**THINK IT'S ALL OVER? Sadly, to get to the good stuff like the finals of '74 and '66 you need to complete a ton of dull ties in Africa, Oceania and the Far East.**




**KITTED OUT Real names for the players have to be earned, which makes a bit of a mockery of the otherwise comprehensive contemporary teams, kits and squads.**




△ The commentary follows play quite well, and moronic comments are more a problem with Townsend himself.



△ Vietnam 1-Brazil 0? It makes perfect sense.



△ The facial models just aren't expressive.




△ Remember Emile Heskey? Neither does Sven, but he's still here. We didn't play him though, that'd be cruel.

and dropped crosses, while the defence's habit of playing it around makes misplaced passes your greatest source of goals.

Crucially, for anyone planning to play this primarily as a solo game, the difficulty level is also set far too low – witness our Vietnamese team humbling Brazil three times on the World Class setting. Why is it so easy to win? After all, can there really be a person alive or dead who hasn't played *FIFA* before in some form or other?

Despite this swollen list of imperfections, *2006FWCG* does manage to encapsulate the presentation and passion, the matches and marketing of a FIFA™ World™ Cup™. From the tuneless horror of the Sheffield Wednesday band to enduring Andy Townsend's own brand of 'commentary', everything is in its rightful, ad-branded place. Okay, some of the glitz feels woefully over the top for an away trip to Azerbaijan, but the combination of ticker-tape cutscenes and wobbly crowd shots does engender enough atmosphere and authenticity.

But while the football is more fluid than the wintry original, *2006FWCG* isn't going to last past the final in June, in spite of the 40 Global Challenge matches and the ability to create your own player. For once you've led England to qualification and final victory and repeated the feat with Wales and Scotland, are you really going to bother with Bulgaria or Bolivia? Nope, for while *2006FWCG* is complete and comprehensive in capturing the detail and depth of Germany 2006 – and hopefully how easy it will be for England to win – it still manages to comes up just a little bit short.

**ALEX COOKE**

### STAMPED OUT

***Points and passport stamps are given for almost everything, from scoring a hat trick to not getting anyone sent off, which can then be spent buying classic players. Somehow it doesn't make all those England friendlies any more meaningful.***

> **"DESPITE FLAWS INHERITED FROM FIFA '06, IT MANAGES TO IMPROVE ON SOME AREAS"**



- More fluent football.
- Effective passing.
- A solid amount of extras.



- Soft goals abound.
- Too easy to score and easy to win.
- Showboating keepers.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**

**Winning Eleven FE**
**Nintendo**
**NGC/79 93%**
**Worth the effort of importing for a more subtle game that demands more thought.**



**8 VISUALS**

Superb presentation but with some on-pitch jerkiness.

**7 SOUNDS**

Bad music but good commentary that genuinely flows.

**6 MASTERY**

Solid AI but the defences are prone to sloppiness.

**6 LIFESPAN**

Not very challenging matches spread over too few games.



**VERDICT**

**A pleasure to play at first, but too many easy wins and duplicate goals mean it won't last much past the 30 days' finals.**



**NGC 72**

"Pray loudly to your nearest available God"




△ Something very meaningful and significant is happening here, we're sure. We like to think that the chubby one's just confessed a deep love for James Blunt. Only the dog is unsurprised.



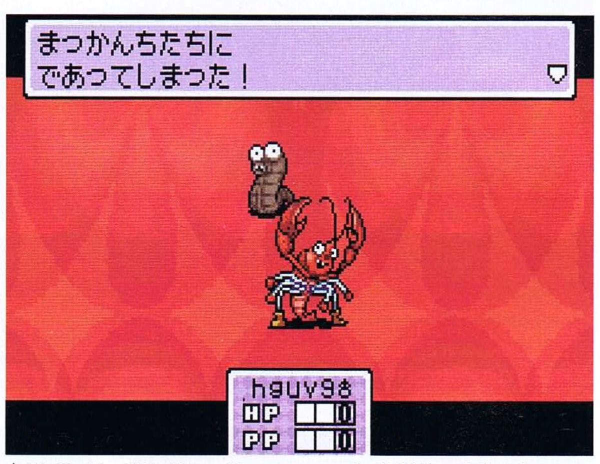

△ You'll be wiping away tears at Flint's many misfortunes. Not at this bit, though. This is just him standing near a cow and a mouse.




△ A house full of bearded crossdressers. This, we gather, is supposed to be hilarious.



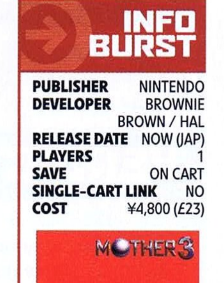
△ Spas are everywhere, and have instant healing qualities. That's 'spa-ctacular'! Sigh.




△ It's like The Little Mermaid gone wrong, isn't it? Especially when you shatter that lobster's pincers with a well-timed punch. Have it!

# MOTHER 3

## **We've waited a decade** for this Mother's Day…



**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| **PUBLISHER** | NINTENDO |
| **DEVELOPER** | BROWNIE BROWN / HAL |
| **RELEASE DATE** | NOW (JAP) |
| **PLAYERS** | 1 |
| **SAVE** | ON CART |
| **SINGLE-CART LINK** | NO |
| **COST** | ¥4,800 (£23) |



And with that, we come full circle. We featured our first preview of *Mother 3* in **NGC** issue 1. That's *April 1997*, you understand. Before a Labour Government, before Harry Potter, before Pokémania. Back then the game was a supersized 3D adventuring mouth-waterer for the N64; in finished form, it's a pocket-friendly top-downish RPG. The question is, can *any* game be worth a nine year wait?

It's a meaty treat: a 20-hour, eight-chapter journey where each segment stars a different character – one of whom, Flint the cowboy, you may remember from distant N64 screenshots. But, in the dimensional gear-shift down from three to two, *Mother 3* has become *Mother 2.5*. It looks, plays and *feels* like its SNES forebear (aka *Earthbound*). That's good in a way: the *Mother* series' pretty pastels and cute-but-twisted character design always made them a work of art. But bland takey-turny battles and flashiness-free play really make the game feel like it's been dug up in a time capsule someone buried in 1995. Think *Sword of Mana* Lite. With a fighting pet dog.

The story's a killer. There's a mouth-gaping upset early on and one particularly harrowing cutscene – you'll be amazed at how a few ostensibly cuddly pixels can make your heart lurch. But because Japanese looks all Greek to us (and probably you), much of the plot – and *Mother*'s quirky humour – is lost in a fug of kanji. Some of the jokes are universal, like walking in on the usually empty spa waters for the 15th time and finding that some random punter has got there before you for once. But all the effort Shigesatu Itoi's put into his "funny, strange and heartrending" plot is wasted on Englishers like us.

So what's here if you're determined to plough through? Combat's barely more complex than *Pokémon*'s – only PSI attacks help take it beyond a simple exchange of punches. But there's one genius touch: racking together combos by timing your moves to the background music. It's intensely rewarding, and together with some sparkling music that pays its dues to *Earthbound*'s aural brilliance, an early birthday party for your ears.

Otherwise: hmm. There are



### TALK TALK

*Importers: aside from the impenetrable plot, Mother 3 won't befuddle you much. Each chapter has a self-contained map with your next target area (usually) scribbled on, and there are few 'puzzles' per se – so if you're stuck, it's generally nothing that can't be fixed by getting sociable with the townsfolk.*

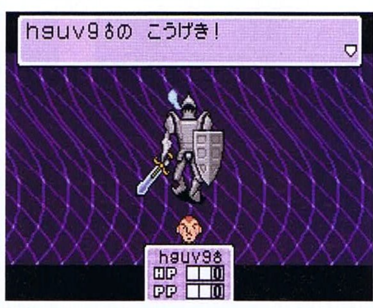
Warm and nurturing or an old slapper in spandex?



Δ These porksome fellas scarper every time you get anywhere near them. The swine.



Δ The Monster Encyclopedia lets you rerun fights. With this chap, you won't want to.




Δ Yes, we really did name this character 'hguv9[male symbol]'. We were tired.



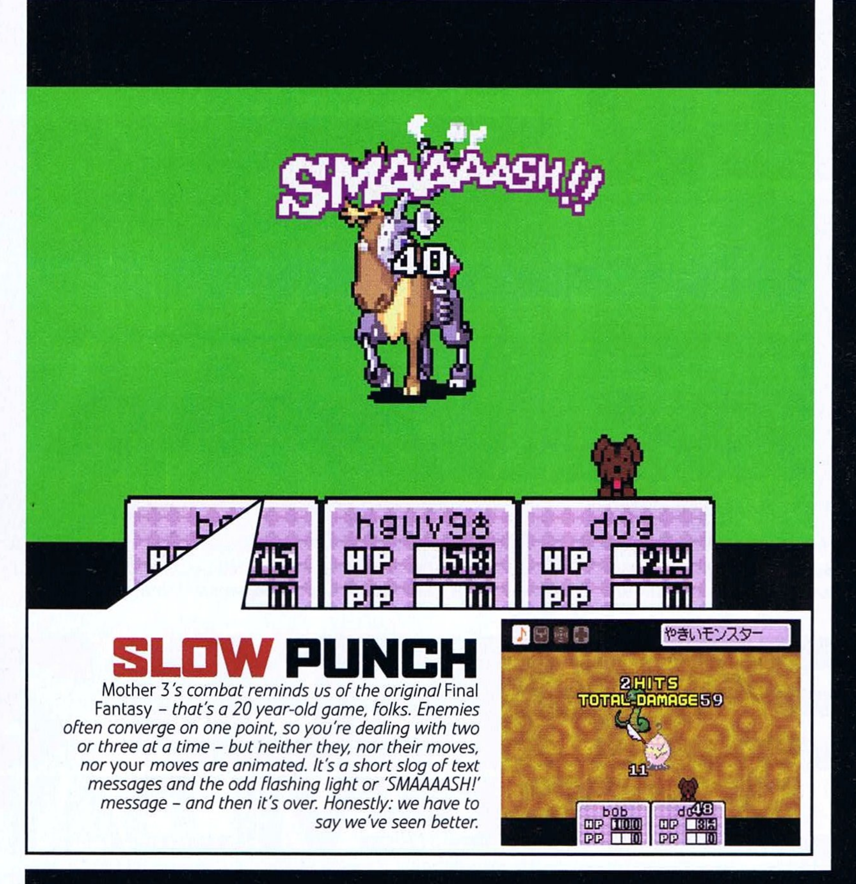
Δ Leaping over gaps on the end of a snake is as puzzly as *M3* gets.



Δ Every Japanese RPG has a desert level. This one's got a monkey, too.



Δ If you know Japanese, that text might be a massive spoiler. Sorry.




## SLOW PUNCH

*Mother 3's combat reminds us of the original* Final Fantasy *– that's a 20 year-old game, folks. Enemies often converge on one point, so you're dealing with two or three at a time – but neither they, nor their moves, nor your moves are animated. It's a short slog of text messages and the odd flashing light or 'SMAAAASH!' message – and then it's over. Honestly: we have to say we've seen better.*

no random battles in *Mother 3*, no hour-long forest maze treks – that's all good. And it's a real charmer. From snake-monsters that look surprised to be facing you in battle, to beautiful environments like jungles, blazing forests, pig cities and austere museums,

**"SNAKE MONSTERS THAT ACTUALLY LOOK SURPRISED TO BE FACING YOU IN BATTLE"**

there's a delight around every turn. But – and maybe it's just us getting old and grumpy – it all feels depressingly basic. Walk forward, fight monster, gobble apple to restore health, repeat to fade.

Up against *Golden Sun*'s screen-battering battles, *Pokémon*'s library of cuddly loons, *Minish Cap*'s masterful dungeons and *Mario & Luigi*'s bubbling vat of idea syrup... this seems lacking.

Still, perhaps if we had a Japanese-friendly brain, Itoi's plot and puns would enthrall us. So this is the score based on *Mother 3* as a game that talks in tongues. Pray loudly to your nearest available god for an English version.

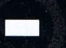
**MARK GREEN**



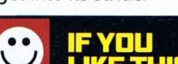
Δ Ghosts getting tipsy on wine and tinkling the ivories? Hardly *Luigi's Mansion*. But tread too close and they'll spook you bad.



- Sparkling visuals, and no orcs or elves.
- Some sweet ideas.
- *Mother* magic.



- Shallow stuff compared to other GBA RPGs.
- Takes a while to really get into its stride.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS...**

**Sword Of Mana**
Nintendo
Unreviewed
SNES gem turned buffed-up GBA blockbuster. Epicness.



**8 VISUALS**
A masterclass of quirkily atmospheric line and colour.

**9 SOUNDS**
Liquid love for the ears – and an actual gameplay feature.

**6 MASTERY**
The Game Boy Color wouldn't have struggled with this.



**7 LIFESPAN**
20 hours straight – and once you're done, you're done.

**VERDICT**
Comfortingly familiar for *Earthbound* veterans; a bit old-fashioned for 21st century RPGers. Wait for an English version.



NGC **77**

"Befuddling slice of boredom"

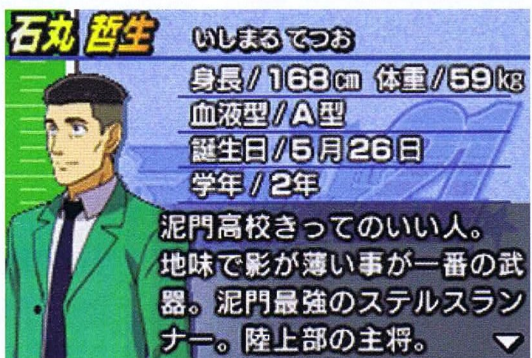



△ "A girl! Talking to me? I think I've just… er, oh dear…"





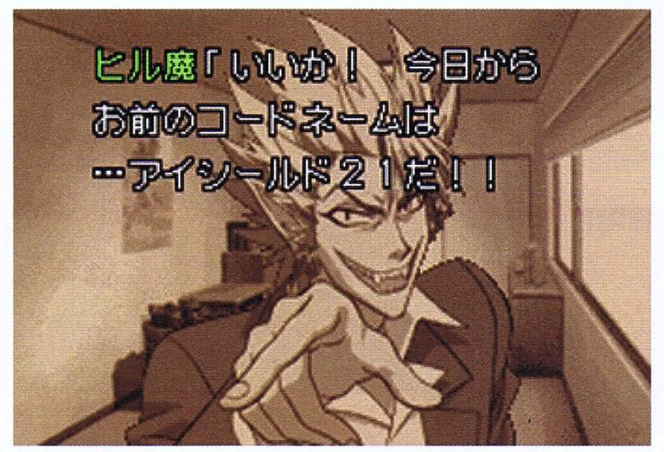





△ You like this? 'Cos this is what you'll get. Over and over and over again until your vitreous humour runs down your cheeks.



△ Creepy undead nurse-things and behatted spike-neck dogs abound in *Eyeshield 21* – well, there's one of each – but value for money proves elusive.




△ Your dastardly arch-rival; you can tell because of the extra-spiky hair, fangs, pointy ears, cat-like eyes and general infernal demeanour.

# EYESHIELD 21 DEVILBATS DEVILDAYS

## A football game… without the football. Eh?

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| **PUBLISHER** | NINTENDO |
| **DEVELOPER** | NINTENDO |
| **OUT** | NOW (JAP) |
| **PLAYERS** | 1 |
| **SAVE** | ON CART |
| **SINGLE-CART LINK** | NO |
| **COST** | ¥3,800 (£18) |



*Eyeshield 21* is a Japanese anime about the trials and tribulations of a wimp who's inducted into the school American Football team. Naturally, things have a slightly fantastical feel, as young Sena – our hero – has, for instance, a devilish arch-enemy who owns a black book that records people's deepest fears.

You might expect this GBA transmogrification of the TV series to offer some footballing action, but, mystifyingly, it doesn't. For the most part, this is a text-based adventure with some button-stabbing minigames thrown in, and graphics are relegated to static screens complete with traditional over-the-top anime gurning. But actual football? That appears to be reserved for the DS version of the game, meaning that, if you own a DS, why would you ever want to splash out on this befuddling slice of boredom?

The answer is you wouldn't, unless you're a) a big fan of the show, and b) fluent in written Japanese. If you're neither of these things then this is unplayable, and, frankly, we can only assume that the football-less non-action on display here can only appeal to people who've invested in the characters and their tribulations, in the same way that only a *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* fan would shell out on a text-based adventure that concentrated on Spike's infatuation with the eponymous heroine. (*Nerd!* – **Ed**)

So, unless you're the type of gamer that must own every obscure and impenetrable piece of software from the land of the rising sun, or a peculiar masochist who spends money on things you can't enjoy – and you might as well pay someone to shout "twit!" at you and punch you in the face if you're thinking of getting this, as the result is much the same – we'd advise leaving this well alone.

**JES BICKHAM**

> "YOU MIGHT AS WELL PAY SOMEONE TO SHOUT "TWIT!" AND PUNCH YOU IN THE FACE"



- Based on a popular anime.
- Um…



- Unintelligible – unless you're Japanese.
- No football!



**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**

**Madden NFL '06**
**EA**
**Not reviewed**
**American Football you can play. Which is a step up from this. But it's on the DS.**



**4 VISUALS**
Static screens. Which are nicely drawn, granted, but, well…

**6 SOUNDS**
Bit of speech, bit of thwocky noise, cheapo rock music.

**2 MASTERY**
Text, screens, a little bit of button-pushing. Pfft.

**5 LIFESPAN**
To be honest, we're not entirely sure. We gave it five hours.

**VERDICT**

**A text-only adventure about a football player, but without any football. The world has gone mad.**





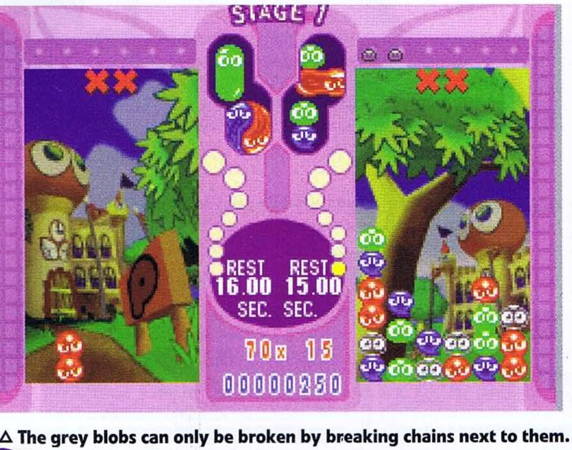




△ The translation took two years? But these chaps speak not good.

△ The blobs can be linked in any shape, so it's hard to form a plan.





△ The grey blobs can only be broken by breaking chains next to them.

△ Sure they're cute, but can they do a T-spin triple?



# PUYO POP FEVER

## It's too little, and much too late…

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| PUBLISHER | IGNITION |
| DEVELOPER | SEGA |
| OUT | NOW |
| PLAYERS | 1-8 |
| SAVE | ON CART |
| SINGLE-CART LINK | YES |
| MIC | NO |
| WI-FI | NO |
| COST | £30 |



This was a launch game in Japan. A launch game! One of the first wave of titles released for Nintendo's brand new DS, put on sale mere days after the first consoles flew out of Akihabara shops. It even hit the States a full year ago. But for some reason *Puyo Pop Fever* has taken precisely 16 months to paddle the 5,940 miles over to Blighty.

But what is almost one and a half years between friends? What could possibly have happened in that time? Apart from the online version of *Tetris* rendering every other puzzle game in the history of this blueish/green oblate spheroid as relevant to today as the Anglo Saxon Chronicles.

And the lack of Wi-Fi isn't the only thing that betrays *Puyo Pop Fever*'s age (although eight player wireless is an option). It's also the way that the game doesn't demand anything from the DS either in terms of touchable technology, processing power or screen size. So while you can play using the stylus, there is no reason to when the D-pad is quicker and simpler. And since the top screen scrunches up the jars, the bottom one is left displaying some cute, but rather redundant character art.

> THE FIGHT ISN'T JUST TO STAY ALIVE, BUT ALSO TO HURT YOUR OPPONENT

Despite being later than Godot on a Virgin train, *Puyo Pop Fever* is still as thoughtful, swift and lobe-straining as any other coloured blob matcher. Except that in this game the fight isn't just to stay alive, but to hurt your opponent, as any chains you clear from your jar dump discoloured shapes on your opponent's screen. And if you mange to enter the 'Fever' mode then pre-designed lines appear, giving you the chance to clear your screen and lob everything on your foe – with disastrous results.

But despite this simple premise, *Puyo Pop Fever* never quite crosses that line from merely challenging to completely intuitive. It remains bright and is demanding, but you won't see the shapes dancing through your dreams or tumbling into your nightmares as you do with the true greats of this competitive genre.

**ALEX COOKE**



- Eight-player download play.
- Looks a bit old now.
- Surprisingly hard to win.

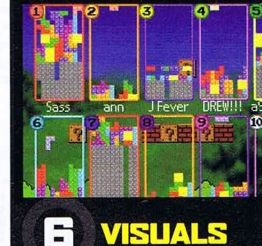


- Won't get under your skin
- The characters annoy.
- You've probably already got it.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**

**Tetris DS**
Nintendo
NGC/119, 90%
Top-of-the-range Wi-Fi puzzle battler with slightly rubbish presentation.





**6 VISUALS**
Nicely squeezes eight onto two screens, but cramped in solo mode.

**4 SOUNDS**
You'll be sliding the sound down to mute after a few moments.

**5 MASTERY**
Showing its age, but at least the wireless element is tidy.

**7 LIFESPAN**
Surprisingly testing and tactical in solo. Best shared, though.

**VERDICT**
Neat and enjoyable but surpassed by flashier, more compelling puzzlers. Feels like a launch game because it was.

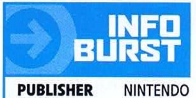


NGC 70

△ The mighty sudoku. This is what Nintendo hopes will attract oldsters to the software, and we have to admit it's a very nice rendition. Only 100 puzzles, mind.

# DR KAWASHIMA'S BRAIN TRAINING

## **Teaching your grey matter** that younger is always better...




| | |
|---|---|
| PUBLISHER | NINTENDO |
| DEVELOPER | NINTENDO |
| RELEASE DATE | MAY 26 |
| PLAYERS | 1-16 |
| SAVE | ON CART |
| SINGLE CART LINK | YES |
| WI-FI | NO |
| MIC | YES |
| COST | £30 |




When DS Lite was released, the lines of prospective buyers waiting outside game stores were noticeably older than the usual array of toughened gamers a Japanese hardware launch tends to attract.

The machine promptly sold out, and Nintendo released a huge batch of old-style DSes to appease some of the demand. That sold out, too. In fact, the DS has been relatively hard to find in Japan since late last year, and it isn't just because of *Nintendogs*, *Mario Kart* and *Animal Crossing*.

No, the product attracting near-*Pokémon* success to the DS is *Brain Training*, which makes its UK debut right about now, and the people who have ensured its sales figures are counted by the million are the salarymen and housewives who probably haven't touched a games machine since the days of the NES.

Whether it can be classed as a videogame is a matter for debate. To us, it seems halfway between a self-help manual (it's based on a popular series of books) and a selective school exam. However, anyone who doubted Satoru Iwata's claim that DS would attract non-gamers ought to be drafting an apologetic email, because *Brain Training* has achieved it in spectacular fashion.

Rather than high scores or achievements, the aim is self-improvement. Work your way through nine simple tests, then take a daily exam to determine how 'old' your brain is. The younger, the better, although if you'd be a little put out to be told you had the lowest possible brain age of 20, you're much too young to be playing this. It's aimed squarely and exclusively at an age group that would be delighted to have a near-teenage brain, which is to say, most people over 30.

We're not remotely qualified to say whether or not the tests will make you cleverer. We've been playing it for a couple of weeks and nobody has come up with any brilliant money-making schemes or figured out how to make cars run on tap water and aspirin, which is a tad disappointing.

But something you'll get out of this, like no other game, is a feeling of time well spent. Maybe playing it for half an hour each day will




**THE TRUTH**

*After each test, the good doctor compares your performance to a mode of transport. Most of us in the office can achieve jet plane speeds on the reading tests (perhaps because we work with words every day) but we're lucky if we rise above walking pace in the maths problems. This is why we write about games rather than programme them.*


Nintendo






NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING


POWER
A
SELECT
HOME
START
b
a
1
2
3
4
Nintendo

# HOW TO... TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

*Nine easy steps to a sharper mind. There are loads more tests you can do but these are the ones that popped up while we were taking the pics, and we were too mentally fatigued to play again to get the others. Okay?*

**STARTING OUT** Up to four people can share one cart. Note the ultra-sprightly KittsBrain. Pause to chuckle at how clapped-out Jes is.

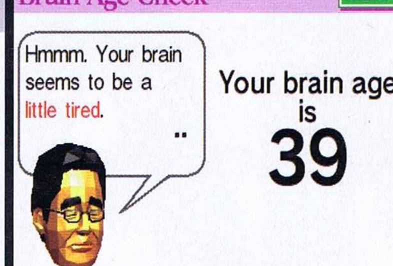
**TRICKY ONE** If you can't remember what you had for dinner last Saturday, this software is for you. That's the design philosophy here.

**TESTING** To find out your brain age, you have to take three special tests. This one is particularly harrowing for shaky-handers.

**WRITE ON** Almost everything is done using the stylus. The handwriting recognition is better than the voice stuff.

**EASY ENOUGH** After a while, the numbers float, spin and pulsate. This could be a warning to stop playing before you go blind.

**BETTER** Read a passage from a classic novel, aloud or in your head. This one doesn't seem to feature in the age checks.



**SCORES** You can compare your progress with everyone else's via graphs and charts. It's all rather fascinating.

**MR MEMORY** Two minutes to memorise a list of words, then three minutes to write as many as you can. We were pleased to score 20. Once.

**OH DEAR** How can a brain age 17 years in 24 hours? The doctor offers tips to help you stay alert, but this is no high-score game.

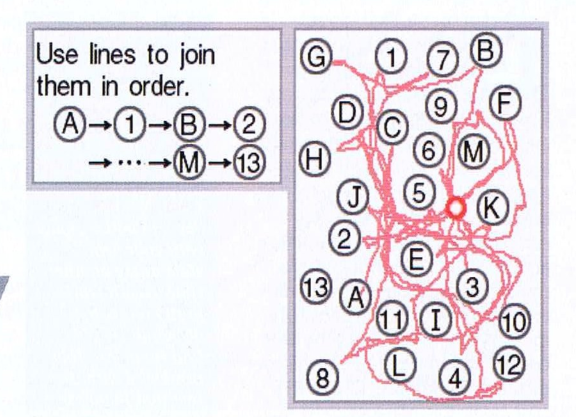
counteract the effects of too much *Tetris*. Maybe not.

It's extremely well put together, and technically as solid as you could hope for. The voice recognition is inevitably flaky at times, making it all too easy to add several years to your brain age because it took multiple attempts to make the DS understand you. But you can always opt to avoid the lone speaking test, and the handwriting recognition is never less than excellent.

Up to four save files can be stored, and the more people use it every day, the more fun it becomes. You can compare your progress with everyone else's, and the excitable Dr Kawashima, who pops up between tests, will throw in some amusing surprises to keep you on your toes. Edu-taining!

**MARTIN KITTS**

## "IT'S AIMED AT AN AGE GROUP THAT'D BE DELIGHTED TO HAVE A NEAR-TEENAGE BRAIN"




**Excellent fun, this one. You have to hold the DS sideways, like a book, for all tests. It flips upside down for all you lefties.**



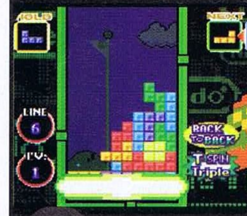
- It's good for you.
- It's actually fun.
- You can have 16-player maths battles.



- Voice recognition.
- Only 100 sudoku puzzles.
- Full price.




**Tetris DS**
Nintendo
NGC/119 90%
Brilliant Wi-Fi puzzle-battle game that will train you in the fine art of insomnia.



**7 VISUALS**
Purely functional. Clean, crisp and uncluttered.

**6 SOUNDS**
No distracting music during the test. A few menu screen noises.

**8 MASTERY**
The handwriting recognition is very impressive.

**9 LIFESPAN**
No more than half an hour per day, until you're super smart.

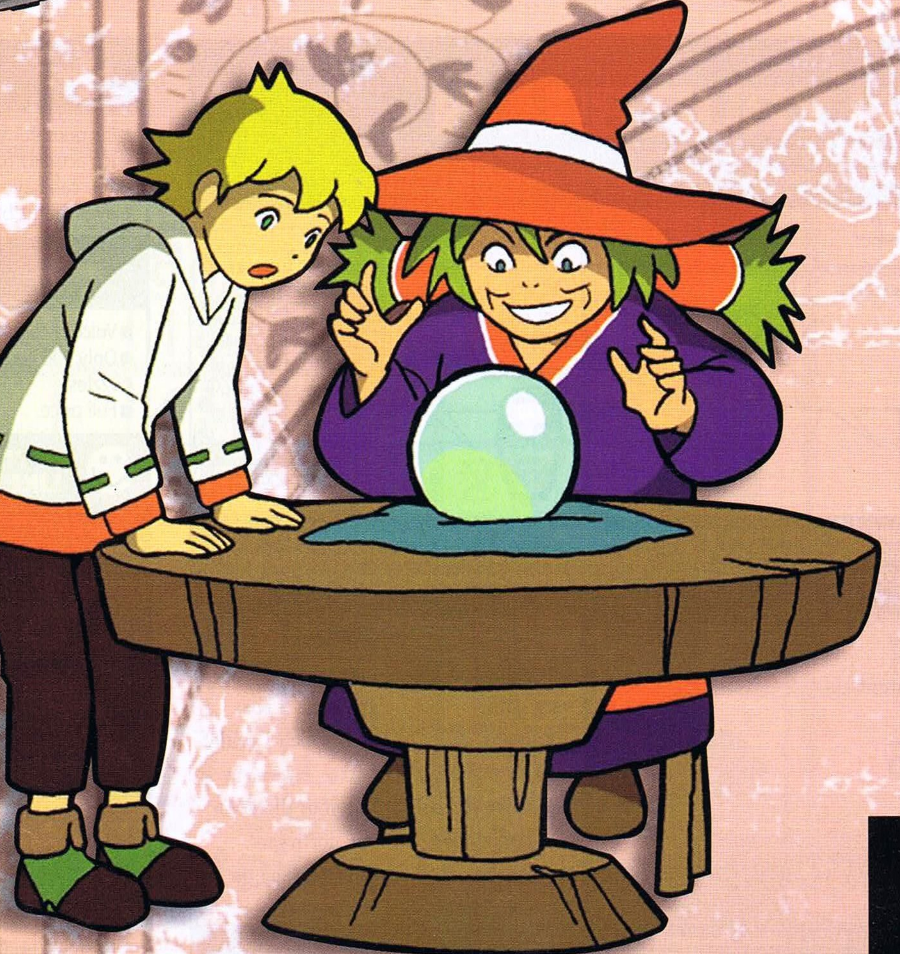
**VERDICT**
Like nothing you've ever played before and, for that reason, a great talking point in the pub. Plus, it's good for you.








"No archers, barbarians or dwarves"





Combining spells can create 350 different attacks. Is one an exploding hamster attack? It's hard to say…




There are 80 different types of beast. This feisty fella can be beaten with the help of a friendly mogwai.

# LOST MAGIC

**Magic circle?** More like magic square, magical squiggle and crazy-like-Penn-and-Teller dodecahedron…

**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| PUBLISHER | UBISOFT |
| DEVELOPER | TAITO |
| RELEASE DATE | OUT NOW |
| PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| SAVE | ON CART |
| SINGLE CART LINK | YES |
| WI-FI | YES |
| MIC | NO |
| COST | £30 |



Lost Magic isn't the RPG that the DS has been waiting for. It probably isn't really a role-player at all. There are no lost wheelbarrows to find, no archers, barbarians or dwarves to join your quest and no local shops gouging out your gold fillings with their combination of overpriced remedies and the owner's homilies. Instead, the battles are fought in real-time, are very rarely random and all the movement and magic is controlled entirely with the stylus. So whatever acronym you choose, RPG or RTS *Lost Magic* still manages to be more.

For while the underpinnings of the adventure are all familiar – a netherworld invasion, an orphaned boy, a mysterious girl and a wrinkled but wizardly coffin-dodging mentor – the mechanics are rather less conventional due to the way that DS technology is used at every turn.



**PWNED!**

*You can battle online with your own stats or try another character. It works pretty nicely too, although we did find some lag. This, combined with the fact that Japanese gamers had more months to build up their warriors, did make it a bit tricky.*

> "IT DOESN'T JUST EMBRACE THE DS – IT STAYS OVER AND COOKS IT BREAKFAST"

Of course, we expect no less with the DS, but *Lost Magic* doesn't just embrace the touch-screen technology, it spends the night, cooks breakfast and leaves a spare toothbrush. So the entire game is controlled via the stylus: movement, conversation, combat, spell casting and character selection. Only one other button and the D-pad is required and the top screen only demands a glance when you want to see a map or look at those lovely Studio Ghibli-created character screens.

But the real surprise is how combat has been placed at the very core of the game instead of exploration, conversation or trade. So instead of wandering

△ Magical barriers can block or harm any enemy intent on attack.

△ Another day, another rocky outcrop to get stuck on.

△ What is 'lively personality' a euphemism for exactly?

△ Don't judge a creature by size alone – magic also plays a vital part. Guess that means that a hamster *could* be lethal.

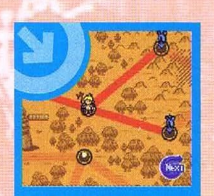
△ Levelling up is automatic and offers no path or route to choose. So, like it or lump it then, magically speaking.

## MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

***Beyond the battlefield there is very little to see or do. Your route through the world is pre-planned, with random battles only really appearing if you start backtracking. There are characters to chat with too, but your conversation rarely changes the path or the plot.***

freely, you follow the engraved Nazca-style lines etched in the dirt, marching from one fight into the next without passing 'Go' and without getting involved in endless seemingly random battles.

And, as you advance, the game reveals a combat system that musters all the innovation that the plot forgot. Played out in real-time with no pauses, no breaks and no fumbling with menus, the action is frantic. For amid the flying fists and soaring spells, our hero Isaac uses his powers by sketching out simple shapes with the stylus. And while these magical hieroglyphs are easily replicated, the quality of the copy affects the range and power of the spell. And since the weak



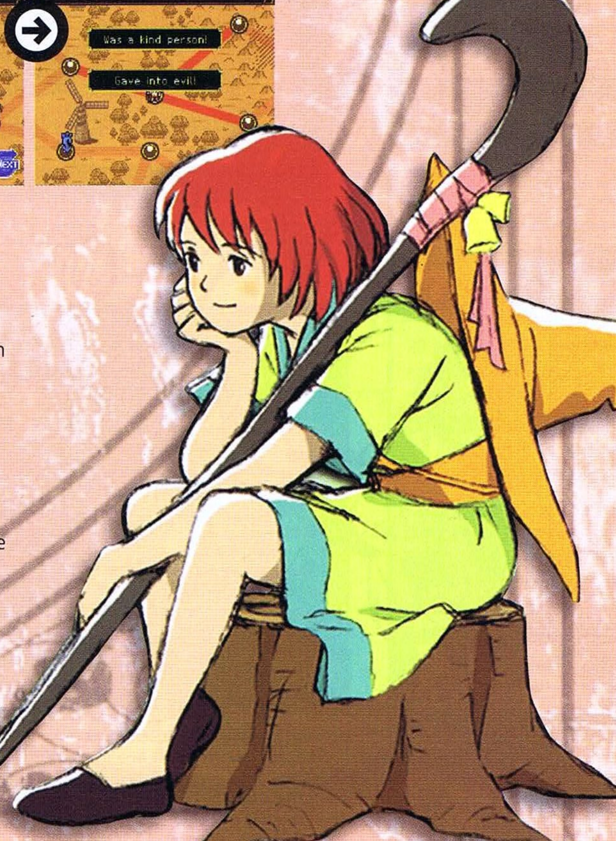
### BORED OF THE RINGS

***A land of beauty is turned ugly by an underworld invasion, and there's a wizard with a wand and an orphaned boy. Obviously his quest will be arduous, his female companion amorous, and the plot will be one big uninteresting cliché.***

wizard relies more on voodoo than judo, you also need to protect the tousle haired tyke.

To protect the wizard's delicate warlocks, he can recruit himself an army of the same unthinking denizens of the underworld who attacked his home. And once our hero has used his magic to capture and convert the beasts, he can then command up to three units in combat via a simple 'point and click' technique.

Despite the seemingly simply nature of all these tasks, the need to perform them all simultaneously means the game demands nippy stylus work as well



"More peaks and valleys than the Himalayas"



△ Capturing these rocks boosts your MP and heals you and your units. What wondrous times these are…




△ Your dad's name is Russell! He might be a level 45 wizard, but still…

## COMMAND AND CONJURER

*Through numerous bloody defeats and lost bouts, the game teaches you how to blend magic, military manoeuvres and aggression to make Isaac an effective leader.*




**MONSTERS MUNCHED** Picking off isolated foes greatly increases your chances of victory.



**FAITH HEALING** Healing your frontline forces regularly is vital for putting a stop to the enemy.



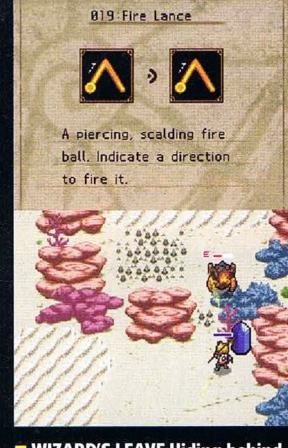

**FIRE SAFETY** Pick the right units: for example, match fire-based fighters with fire.




**EARTH, WOUND AND FIRE** Casting the wrong spell can heal an enemy – beware!




**MONSTER'S BALLS** Stealing an objective or killing a wizard can result in an instant win.




**WIZARD'S LEAVE** Hiding behind a wall or running away can save energy and time.






as refreshingly varied stratagems. While at first simply obliterating your foes is enough, soon the changing and often challenging objectives force you to forge new plans: pathetic villagers have to be protected, fleet footed escapes must be made against overwhelming odds and magic-giving stones need to be seized while the clock ticks. Suddenly, instead of merely bullying and blitzkrieging your way across the battlefield, you are blocking portals, throwing in long-range attacks and splitting your units for elementary pincer-moments.

And combined with mastering this surprisingly high level of tactical sophistication, Isaac also has to provide constant magical support to his chums, lobbing fireballs into melees, healing any wounded drones and micro-managing the slightly stupid AI. Now compress it all into a four

**"YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF THINKING EVERY BIT AS HARD AS YOU'RE DRAWING"**

## SOMETHING SPELLS GOOD

The hand is quicker than the pen...



A quick stab of L and the rune menu comes up, which means it's time to get your wrist supports on and start sketching out spells.



Make a perfect match with the version above and your magic will be stronger than any sloppy copy.



Adding a second spell opens up a whole world of far more powerful attacks, as you can make new combinations.



Everything uses MP though, so make sure you have enough or your David Blane hocus pokery will be wasted.

minute long duel and suddenly you find yourself thinking every bit as hard as you are drawing.

With a game of this complexity, you might hope for a little explanation. But not with *Lost Magic*, for outside the tutorial, you are left in the dark. Too many objectives are vague, battles are wandered into blindly and, most crucially of all, it fails to highlight how the elemental aspects of the bestiary work. It is only through bitter experience that you learn how to best use the water, fire, earth and windy troops at your disposal. Factor this into a game that already has a difficulty curve with more peaks and valleys than the Himalayas, and some levels can seem almost impossible to even the most dedicated player or serial online FAQ user.

But all this depth comes at a price – slowdown. As the units build and the magic mounts, the action can start to chug. And while the effect never lasts for that long, it is quite pronounced. But like all the flaws in *Lost Magic*, it isn't ruinous, merely annoying. For, as with the rest of the game, you just need to show the concentration of an RTS general and the commitment of an RPGer, and *Lost Magic* will reveal its hidden enchantment.

**ALEX COOKE**



### MANAGE A MENAGERIE

*Capturing creatures for your army of the brain-dead requires rapid use of the dark rune. You can cast this spell and watch as your book of beasts swallows them up and adds them to your ranks. Or more likely, see them shrug it off.*




### +

- Fluid and real-time.
- A huge variety of spells and warriors.

### –

- A lack of explanation.
- Plot predictability.
- Nasty slowdown.

### IF YOU LIKE THIS...

**Advance Wars Dual Strike**
Nintendo
**NGC/110 95%**
You have to wait your turn, but it's more intuitive and better balanced.

### 8 VISUALS

Cute and winsome characters fight on lovely backdrops.

### 7 SOUNDS

Inoffensive and light if slightly unmemorable music.

### 7 MASTERY

All touch-driven action that feels precise and accurate.

### 8 LIFESPAN

About 18 hours of main game plus enjoyable Wi-Fi extras.

### VERDICT

**Half of it is flashy, imposing and slightly annoying. The other half demands your blood, sweat and tears.**





NGC 80




FROM THE MAKERS OF NGC

# BETTER BY DESIGN

"Minigames: Yes"



## Better By Design...

### How good games become great

Ever wondered how the games we know and love actually came into being? Why was Luigi the biggest star of Gamecube's launch? Where do Pokémons come from? What dark magic enables Mario to hold the same party, year after year?

Every game begins life as a design proposal. Even the most memorable gaming moments were once just words on paper.

To get to the bottom of this creative mystery, we dispatched our team of News Ninjas to infiltrate the places where games are born.

Many ninjas didn't make it. Some are still passing through the colons of various guard dogs.

But a hardy few returned, and with the information we managed to extract from them before they succumbed to their injuries, we were able to reconstruct exactly what they saw...

**Internal use only - Quality Assurance**

**Product name:** Mario Party ~~3~~ ~~4~~ ~~FIVE~~

**QA Stage 1 - Core gameplay**

Minigames: **Yes**
Vaguely tedious board game: **Yes**
Strips the skin from your hands: **NO**

Proportion of game that can be completed by randomly punching/grabbing/twisting/squeezing the controller: ~~65%~~ ~~7x%~~ **80%**

Proportion of game spent waiting for computer players to finish their turn: **20%**

**QA Stage 2 - Value/Extras**

VOICE TALENT

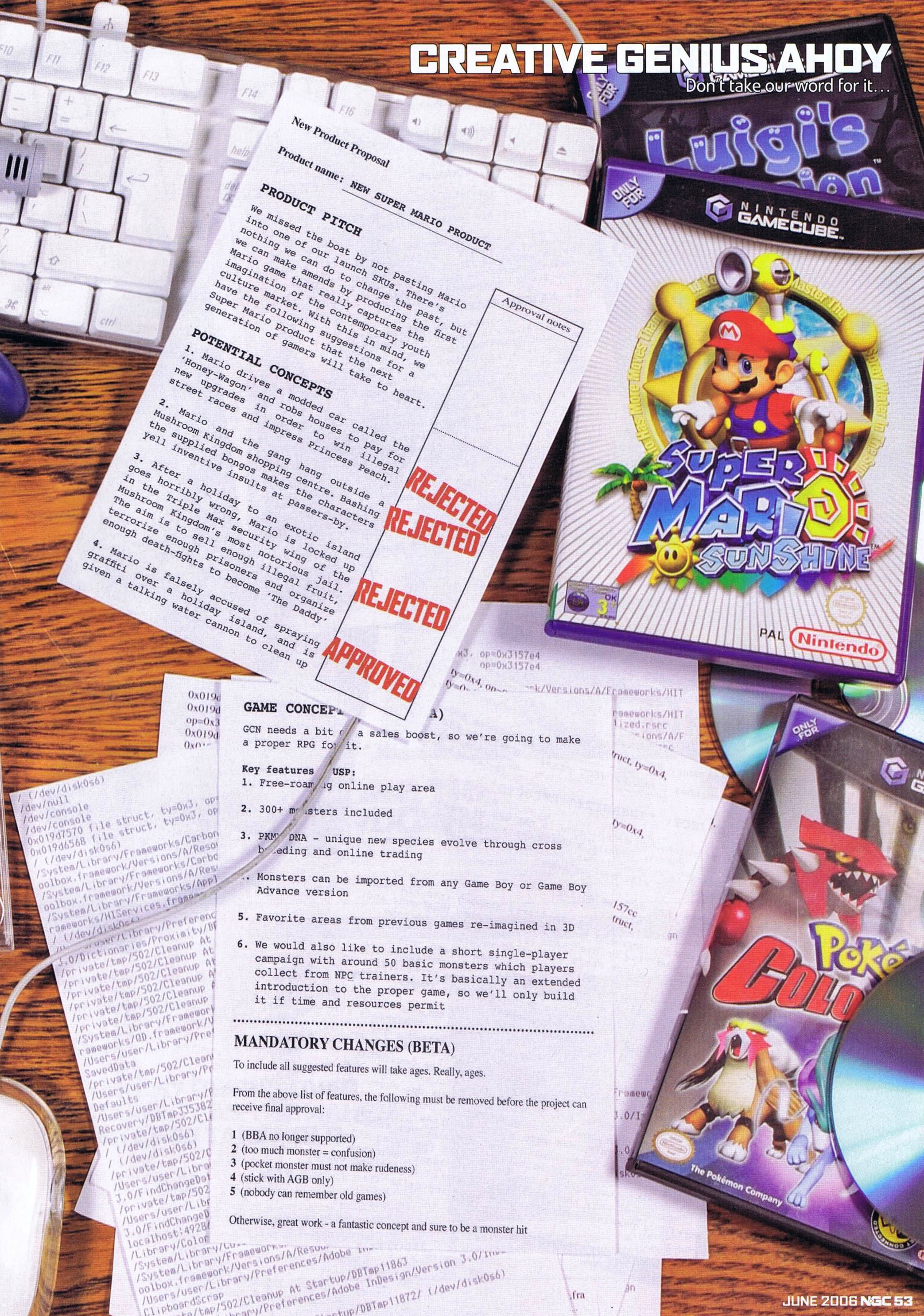
rev.2 - added more Mario samples
rev.3 - 3 new Luigi samples
rev.4 - no changes
rev.4.1 - updated Peach libary
rev.5 - Latest version of 'woo-hoo' recording included (note to programmers: drop a couple of minigames to make space)
rev.6 - Current talent has increased their fees. Consider reverting to Hoskins?

Pointless gimmick: **Not required**
~~Not required - NONE~~
~~Still not needed~~
We can probably ~~get away with another one of these~~, no sweat
MICROPHONE

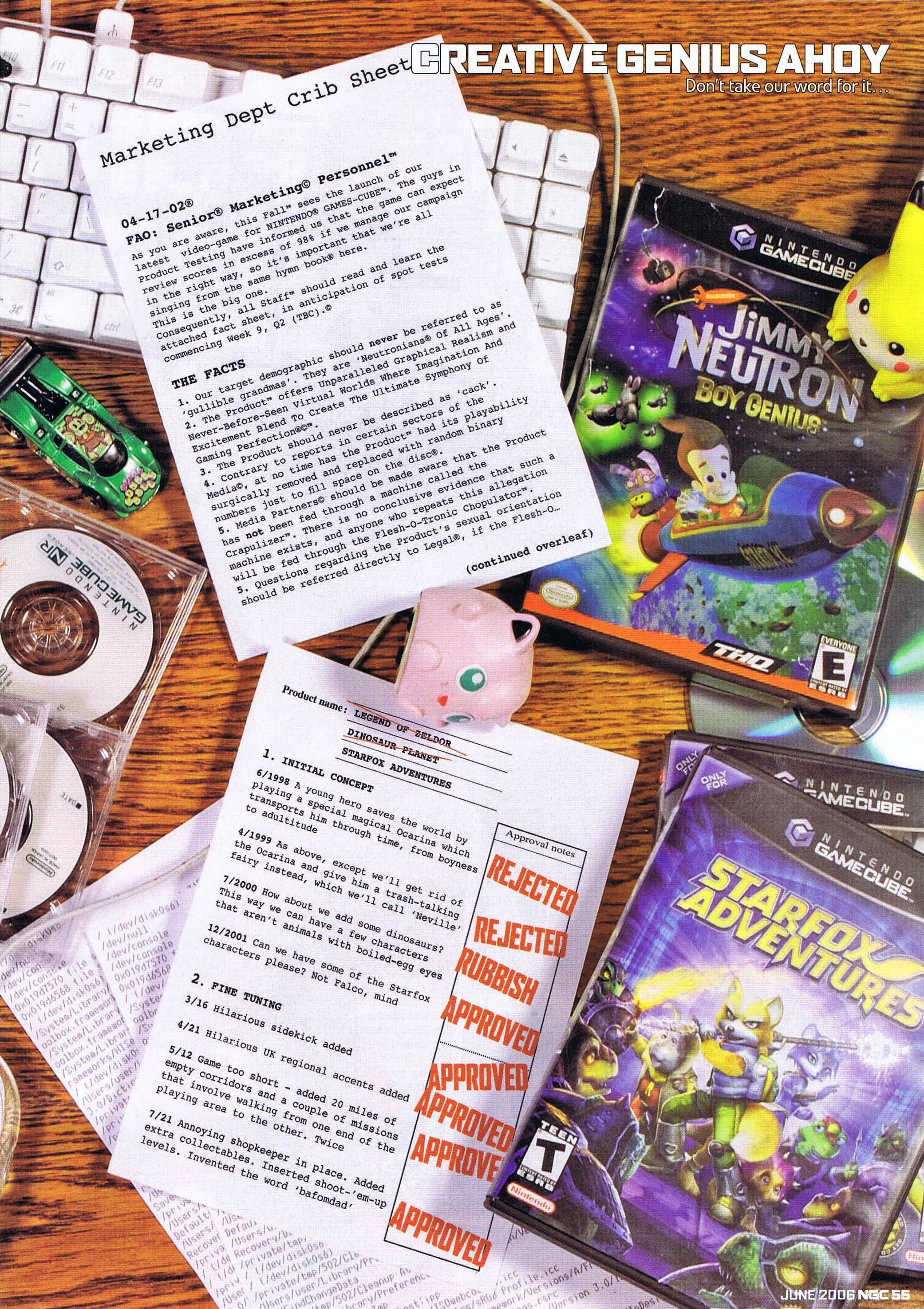
**Approval notes**

DON'T GO CRAZY WITH THE MINI GAMES! WE NEED TO SAVE A FEW FOR NEXT TIME.

APPROVED
APPROVED
APPROVED
APPROVED
APPROVED
APPROVED
APPROVED


New Product Proposal
Product name: NEW SUPER MARIO PRODUCT
PRODUCT PITCH
We missed the boat by not pasting Mario into one of our launch SKUs. There's nothing we can do to change the past, but we can make amends by producing the first Mario game that really captures the imagination of the contemporary youth culture market. With this in mind, we have the following suggestions for a Super Mario product that the next generation of gamers will take to heart.
POTENTIAL CONCEPTS
1. Mario drives a modded car called the 'Honey-Wagon' and robs houses to pay for new upgrades in order to win illegal street races and impress Princess Peach.
2. Mario and the gang hang outside a Mushroom Kingdom shopping centre. Bashing the supplied bongos makes the characters yell inventive insults at passers-by.
3. After a holiday to an exotic island goes horribly wrong, Mario is locked up in the Triple Max security wing of the Mushroom Kingdom's most notorious jail. The aim is to sell enough illegal fruit, terrorize enough prisoners and organize enough death-fights to become 'The Daddy'
4. Mario is falsely accused of spraying graffiti over a holiday island, and is given a talking water cannon to clean up
Approval notes
REJECTED
REJECTED
REJECTED
APPROVED
GAME CONCEPT
GCN needs a bit of a sales boost, so we're going to make a proper RPG for it.
Key features USP:
1. Free-roaming online play area
2. 300+ monsters included
3. PKMN DNA - unique new species evolve through cross breeding and online trading
Monsters can be imported from any Game Boy or Game Boy Advance version
5. Favorite areas from previous games re-imagined in 3D
6. We would also like to include a short single-player campaign with around 50 basic monsters which players collect from NPC trainers. It's basically an extended introduction to the proper game, so we'll only build it if time and resources permit
MANDATORY CHANGES (BETA)
To include all suggested features will take ages. Really, ages.
From the above list of features, the following must be removed before the project can receive final approval:
1 (BBA no longer supported)
2 (too much monster = confusion)
3 (pocket monster must not make rudeness)
4 (stick with AGB only)
5 (nobody can remember old games)
Otherwise, great work - a fantastic concept and sure to be a monster hit
Luigi's
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
PAL
Nintendo
The Pokémon Company


Internal use only - New Product Proposal
Product name: MARIO LUIGI'S MANSION
1. INITIAL CONCEPT
GAMECUBE is launching without a big franchise title to back it up – no Mario, no Zelda, no Kid Icarus, nothing.
This is not a problem because we have something far better – a short (sub-8hr) action-adventure set in a haunted mansion (reuse of scenery?) starring everyone's favorite Nintendo character: Luigi.
2. MARKET RESEARCH
Latest data suggests kids will need some sort of training in order to use GAMECUBE's revolutionary dual-analog handset, as the concept of a controller featuring two independent analog sticks will be completely alien to them.
LUIGI'S MANSION will be the ideal training ground for dual-analog control. It will also prove that kids no longer want games that last longer than a weekend, as demonstrated in the chart below:
Figure 1:
How NINTENDO will rule the next-gen market with GAMECUBE and Luigi
KIDZ
BORING GAMES
Approval notes
APPROVED
APPROVED
APPROVED
APPROVED
Memo
Internal use only
Project name: PROJECT HAPPINESS
For attention : ALL PROJECT STAFF
SUBJECT: "INSANITY" EFFECTS
A major feature of the game is the use of subtle audio-visual cues to signify a character's descent into insanity. We need as many of these as possible, so any suggestions will most welcome.
Here's what we have so far:
1. Character's head begins slowly sinking into his torso, ultimately emerging from his ass. He then flips over and starts walking on his hands for the rest of the game.
2. Spooky voices start whispering suggestive phrases, such as: "you are going insane"; "you're mad, you"; and "do it, do it, kill them all, kill them now" (backwards)
3. A picture of a loved one flashes on the screen, made up to look like they've been decomposing for several weeks (requires use of Game Boy Camera).
4. Character walks to the middle of the screen, pulls down his pants and takes a dump, which he then smears all over the walls and the 'inside' of the screen. Afterwards, he carries on as if nothing has happened.
5. Screen goes dark, as if the console has powered down. We then fake a restart, with a 'Playstation' logo, and the first level of Grand Theft Auto loads up, except all the cars have been replaced by wheelie bins, and the main character has turned into a tuft of grass.
6. Character keeps looking over his shoulder at the player, ocassionally muttering, "Stop following me".
7. Character drinks a can of strong lager, urinates into the empty can, then leaves it on top of a wall and waits for a passing tramp to wander past and drink it.
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
Luigi's Mansion
ONLY FOR
Eternal Darkness
Sanity's Requiem
Write-4-all
paint marker


Marketing Dept Crib Sheet
04-17-02®
FAO: Senior® Marketing© Personnel™
As you are aware, this Fall™ sees the launch of our latest video-game for NINTENDO® GAMES-CUBE™. The guys in Product Testing have informed us that the game can expect review scores in excess of 98% if we manage our campaign in the right way, so it's important that we're all singing from the same hymn book® here.
This is the big one.
Consequently, all Staff™ should read and learn the attached fact sheet, in anticipation of spot tests commencing Week 9, Q2 (TBC).©
THE FACTS
1. Our target demographic should never be referred to as 'gullible grandmas'. They are 'Neutronians® Of All Ages'.
2. The Product™ offers Unparalleled Graphical Realism and Never-Before-Seen Virtual Worlds Where Imagination And Excitement Blend To Create The Ultimate Symphony Of Gaming Perfection®©™.
3. The Product should never be described as 'cack'.
4. Contrary to reports in certain sectors of the Media©, at no time has the Product™ had its playability surgically removed and replaced with random binary numbers just to fill space on the disc®.
5. Media Partners© should be made aware that the Product has not been fed through a machine called the Crapulizer™. There is no conclusive evidence that such a machine exists, and anyone who repeats this allegation will be fed through the Flesh-O-Tronic Chopulator™.
5. Questions regarding the Product's sexual orientation should be referred directly to Legal®, if the Flesh-O…
(continued overleaf)
Product name: ~~LEGEND OF ZELDOR~~
~~DINOSAUR PLANET~~
STARFOX ADVENTURES
1. INITIAL CONCEPT
6/1998 A young hero saves the world by playing a special magical Ocarina which transports him through time, from boyness to adultitude
4/1999 As above, except we'll get rid of the Ocarina and give him a trash-talking fairy instead, which we'll call 'Neville'
7/2000 How about we add some dinosaurs? This way we can have a few characters that aren't animals with boiled-egg eyes
12/2001 Can we have some of the Starfox characters please? Not Falco, mind
2. FINE TUNING
3/16 Hilarious sidekick added
4/21 Hilarious UK regional accents added
5/12 Game too short - added 20 miles of empty corridors and a couple of missions that involve walking from one end of the playing area to the other. Twice
7/21 Annoying shopkeeper in place. Added extra collectables. Inserted shoot-'em-up levels. Invented the word 'bafomdad'
Approval notes
REJECTED
REJECTED
RUBBISH
APPROVED
APPROVED
APPROVED
APPROVE
APPROVED
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
JIMMY NEUTRON BOY GENIUS
THQ
EVERYONE E
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
STARFOX ADVENTURES
TEEN T
Nintendo

# LOOKING FOR NINTENDO IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

## They don't just make the world's best games – there's a whole world of Nintendo oddities in Japan




Mario and Link both turned 20 years old recently – the traditional point when Japanese children come of age and are treated as adults. And now that Nintendo's firstborn are out of the house, they're certainly turning up in some unexpected places. In fact, whether it's hearing the 'bad-ding!' of a gold coin on a standard TV quiz show, or the discovery of a Nintendo label on an ordinary product, it's impossible to avoid Nintendo in Japan. We sent Gearóid Reidy to investigate the strange places the Big N crops up…

**Mario the Shill**

Like Bill Murray showed in *Lost in Translation*, Japanese commercials are famous for their has-been celebrity endorsements. We hope that doesn't mean Mario's past it – he sold out last Christmas, showing up on TV ads and posters to advertise a New Year's sale at Parco, a national chain of upmarket department stores.

The TV ad features a skit of the original *Mario Bros* in which, instead of arriving at a castle, Mario reaches a Parco store where, presumably, he can finally spend some of the hard-earned gold coins he's died so many times for.

The ads show Mario wearing a kuromontsuki, a ceremonial black-crested kimono, which is a damn sight better than his usual choice of red dungarees or, um, blue dungarees.

And while game 'celebrity' endorsements have been seen before – Lara Croft and Lucozade, for example – Parco is quite a step up in class. This Christmas: Sonic and Harrods? Macy's and Master Chief?




△ It's-a-Mario, and he's wearing a skirt.

# LOOKING FOR NINTENDO

It's kitsch gone crazy

### HANAFUDA

Dedicated Nintendophiles will recall that it's thanks to a Japanese card game called hanafuda ('flower cards') that Nintendo came to be – Nintendo founder Fusajiro Yamauchi set up the company to make them in 1889.

Even 118 years later, with Nintendo now wealthier than poor Fusajiro could ever have imagined, it's strange to find Nintendo still making the little cards. But Nintendo is one of the leading card makers in Japan, and it's still possible to buy Nintendo hanafuda (or regular playing cards) anywhere in Japan.

Hanafuda are about a quarter of the size of regular cards, printed on hard wood-styled plastic. There are 12 suits – one for each month – and four cards in each suit. For example, March cards have different pictures of cherry blossoms. Each card is worth different points, and the aim of the game is to match up different combinations. The game is often associated with Yakuza, which explains our difficulty in finding anyone to explain the rules to us properly.

And we know we should have expected as much from the makers of the Wavebird controller, but Nintendo playing cards are the absolute best we've ever felt – pleasingly thick and heavy, without sticking together like so many cheaper ones. Another design win for Nintendo. If Nintendo made cars, they would run on air with pine-scented exhaust fumes.




Δ Napoleon is a much-ignored antedecent of the side-scrolling platformer.

◁ Ooh, look at those 'come hither' eyes…




Δ I'll see your songbird and raise you a flower.

### Your Grandfather Would Know

Bubble-economy-era Japanophile fluff was always full of absolute twaddle about Japan having this fascinating mix of new and old. In Nintendo's case, however, it's actually true. Despite being a company that most people associate with high-tech innovations, the Big N still makes a lot of things your grandad would love, assuming your grandad is an old Japanese man.

### Radio, Radio

Yeah, yeah, so you can buy *Zelda* soundtracks performed by the Tokyo Philharmonic and that rare "*Guilty Gear XX77alphaplussuper*" soundtrack they only ever released half a copy of – but here we're talking Nintendo music that real people actually listen to.

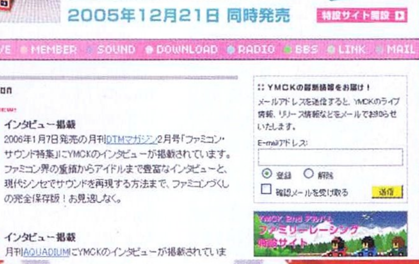
Back in 2001, the song used to promote *Pikmin*, Strawberry Flower's "Ai no Uta" ("Song of Love"),






Δ Family music for a very special kind of family.




Δ You can even make the YMCK musicians out of Dots. If you like.

# LOOKING FOR NINTENDO

"Back away from us very, very slowly…"

**OGURA HYAKUNIN ISSHU**

The Ogura Hyakunin Isshu is a collection of 100 five-line tanka poems written by various poets between the 7th and 13th centuries.

You might well be struggling to see the connection to Nintendo. Turns out these poems have been turned into a traditional card game – Nintendo makes the cards, natch – called uta garuta, which is usually played on New Year's Day.

Here's how to play: cards with the last two lines of the poems are put on a table. One player has cards with the full poems, and reads the first lines. The other players compete to be the first one to grab the right card. For example, if one player reads "I wandered lonely as a cloud…", the others try to grab "that floats on high o'er vales and hills".

*Mario Kart* it ain't, admittedly, but there's probably a deck of cards in every house in the country. Hiroshi Yamauchi has even announced plans to somehow turn this madness into an anime, the first one to be produced by Nintendo itself.

Nintendo also makes such obscurities as dice, poker chips and sets for shogi (Japanese chess), mahjong and go, the ancient Chinese strategy game – though the frighteningly decrepit state of these sections on the Nintendo website (see www.nintendo.co.jp/n09/saipo/saipo.html) makes us think they're still concentrating on Twilight Princess…



△ These chips are simple, elegant, and primary-coloured. For the kids?




△ The next-gen hardware was never going to live up to the hype.










became a minor obsession, hitting the #1 spot and selling almost twice as many copies as the game itself.

And last year's #1 novelty tune was "B-Dash" by the Tongari Kids, a nostalgic paean to *Super Mario Bros.* It's a rap set to two famous *Mario* tunes, with 'hilarious' lyrics about Mum unplugging the console to do the vacuuming, or Dad switching channels to watch the sumo. Game experiences really are universal! Except for the sumo part, obviously.

But both are mere amateurs compared to YMCK – a Tokyo three-piece who make their music out of NES sound effects and samples. The result is rather head-wreckingly fantastic – it sounds just like a NES game, complete with the *Mario* 1-Up sound and an electronic voice that may be a cameo from Stephen Hawking, but with multiple layers of sound and vocals stacked on top of each other in a way that would make an NES feel rather ill. Experience it at: www.ymck.net/e/sound.html

**Join the .s**

.s (or 'Dots') are a chance to peer into Miyamoto's mind and see how to put together iconic characters with fewer resources than a kindergarten classroom. You get a plain board and several hundred square dots representing pixels, and can put them together into a famous game character or anything you like, as evidenced by our shamefully bad **NGC** logo.

Just like the original design, they're so basic that it does make us admire how Nintendo were able to create memorable characters that have lasted 20 years, while today's multi-million pound technology can only create anonymous freaks like Prince Tricky.

Other Dots sets are available, including *Ice Climber*, *Gradius* and *Pac Man* – though, to be honest, being a giant yellow ball, we can't imagine the last one is much of a challenge. Randomly, the mighty YMCK recently released their own special edition Dots set too. It's a small world after all…

**Mobile dress-up**

Dress-up might mean little girls playing princess to you and me, but this is the country where something as hardcore-sounding as 'pimpin' your car' is reduced to 'car dress-up'.

Everyone is obsessed with 'phone dress-up', with even otherwise normal videogames journalists being found with some keitai sutorappu (mobile phone straps often featuring things like Hello Kitty or Mickey Mouse) dangling from their phone.

So we set out to create the ultimate Nintenphone using common accessories. We took a plain *Zelda*-and-Famicom strap, then added a solar-powered *Mario* strap which flashes on and off every 0.35 seconds for no apparent reason, and finally a 'mobile dress-up sheet' you stick to your phone, with a *Mario* scene and about a billion air pockets.

Our new phone means that every time we make a call in public, onlookers will know our love for Nintendo. And also, that they should back away from us very, very slowly…




△ You'd never guess journalists got paid for this sort of thing, would you?






Play like a freakin' robot in...

# TETRIS DS






## THE ESSENTIALS

Make sure you're on speaking terms with these basic techniques before you go any further...



△ An I-block in both hand and bush.

### HOLDING

**KEEP YOUR I-BLOCKS HANDY**

To maximise your Tetris potential, keep an I-block in your Hold box. Of course, you'll sometimes have to swap it out of there if your next block won't fit easily on your stack, but the more often you have an I-block in reserve, the easier it will be to score a quick Tetris.

△ No, I won't clean up my bedroom.

### PRIORITIES

**CLEAN FIRST, KILL LATER**

It's important to think ahead. Saving for successive Tetrises may be the best way to deal a game-winning blow to your opponent, but you'll be at a disadvantage unless you deal with junk as swiftly as possible. Clear away your junk blocks before rebuilding your stack.



△ Maximise your stacking options.

### STACKING

**ALWAYS NEAT AND TIDY**

Always leave a gap on one side of the playfield, to accommodate the I-block you're keeping in reserve. If you can safely build your stack eight lines high, you'll then be able to drop an upcoming I-block into the gap, followed immediately by the I-block from your Hold box. This will send at least nine lines of rage-inducing junk to your opponent. On the other hand, if you're playing a very fast opponent, you should drop your I-blocks as soon as you have the opportunity. Otherwise, you'll be hammered while waiting to fill that eighth line.

## SCORING

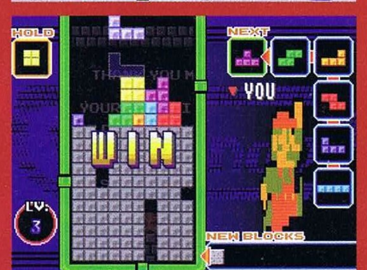
The best move you're ever likely to perform in a multiplayer game is a Back-To-Back Tetris – the five lines of junk it dumps on your opponent, added to the four lines it clears from your own screen, make it worth a total 'swing' of nine lines. You'll get the same swing by performing the implausible T-Spin Triple, as detailed on the next page, but if you're good enough to get one of those at will, you really have no need of tips from the likes of us.

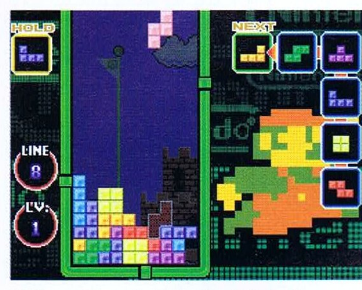
| EVENT | JUNK |
|---|---|
| *Double* | 1 line |
| *Triple* | 2 lines |
| *Tetris* | 4 lines |
| *B2B Tetris* | 5 lines |
| *T-Spin Single* | 2 lines |
| *T-Spin Double* | 4 lines |
| *T-Spin Triple* | 6 lines |
| *B2B T-Spin Single* | 3 lines |
| *B2B T-Spin Double* | 5 lines |
| *B2B T-Spin Triple* | 7 lines |









△ A gentle spot of pruning is in order.

### TRIMMING

**A BIT LIKE GARDENING**

While saving for a Tetris, you can manage the height of your stack by trimming lines from the top or middle. As long as you don't leave any odd blocks over the gap, this is a great way to keep sending a few extra lines of junk to your opponent, before thumping them with the big score when the opportunity arises.

### WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

***Seven types of shape, each made from four squares, fall in random order from the top of the screen. Your task is to eliminate them from the playing area by stacking them to form horizontal lines. The more lines you eliminate at once, the more 'junk' is added to the bottom of your opponent's screen.***

***Devised by Soviet mathematician Alexey Pajitnov in the mid 1980s, Tetris was bundled with the original Game Boy. It sold more than 30 million copies on that platform alone, and has since been released and re-released on practically every format ever created, making it the world's most successful videogame.***



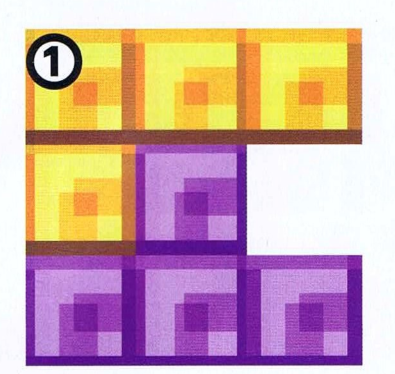
### WHAT WE SAID

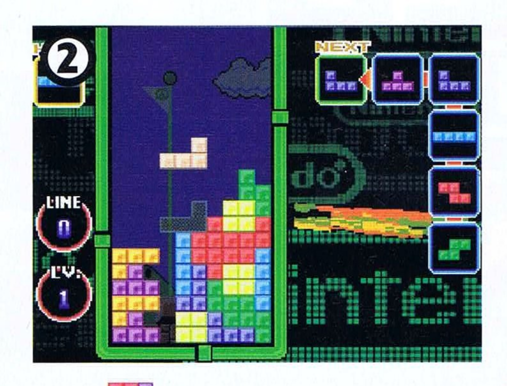
**If you're one of the many who rarely got to play multiplayer *Tetris*, you'll love this. It's far from being the most 'complete' version of the game to date, but the Wi-Fi battles are so fantastic, you won't notice the bare bones presentation and options.**



## ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

The fabled Back-To-Back T-Spin Triple – effectively a guaranteed win if you can do it in multiplayer…




### STEP ONE
**THE SETUP**

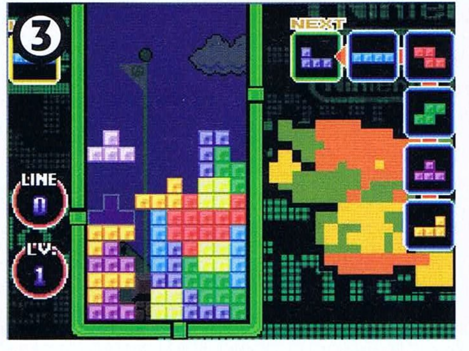
**1.** The simplest way is to combine a T-block and L-block to set up a left-hand T-Spin. They need to be slotted together as shown here. You could use a T and a J to do this on the opposite side of the playfield.

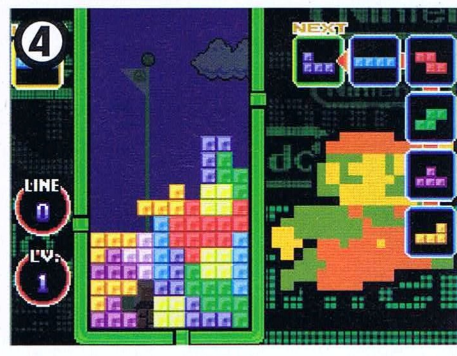
**2.** Leave a gap next to your T&L combo. The other six columns need to be filled solid. For a T-spin to work, you need to make a one-square 'overhang' which we're about to do with this next L-block.

### STEP TWO
**SPIN ON THIS**

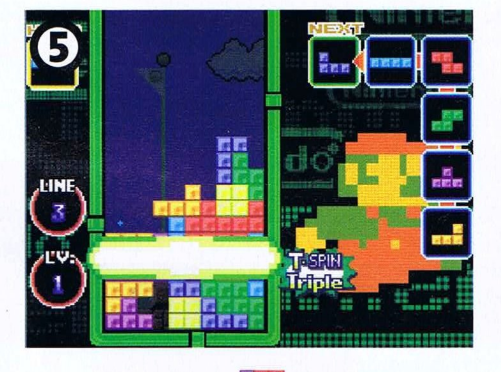
**3.** When it's all ready, you need another T-block to start it off. Soft drop it on the leftmost L, then slide it to the right. Although it looks like it shouldn't fit in that space below, it most certainly will in a second.

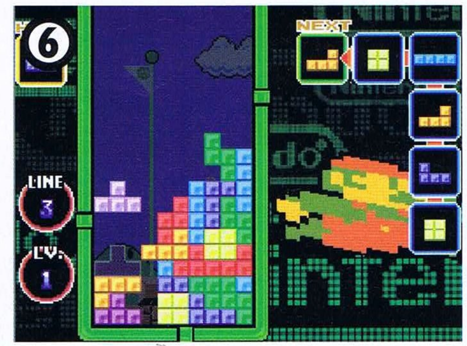
**4.** What happens next is pure Tetris magic. With the T-block nestled under the overhang, rotate it anticlockwise. It will slot instantly into place, and you'll have performed the most unlikely move in the game.






### STEP THREE
**THERE'S MORE…**

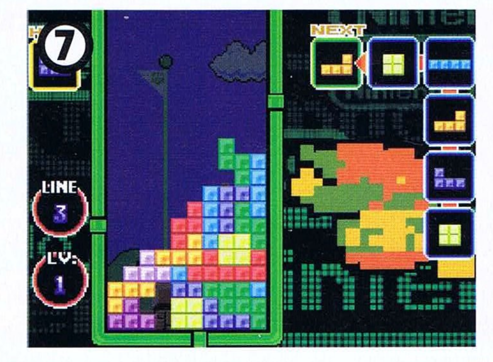
**5.** There you go. Just in case you thought we were making it all up or something. If you can do this in a multiplayer game, the whole world will fear and respect you. Of course, you can always go one better…

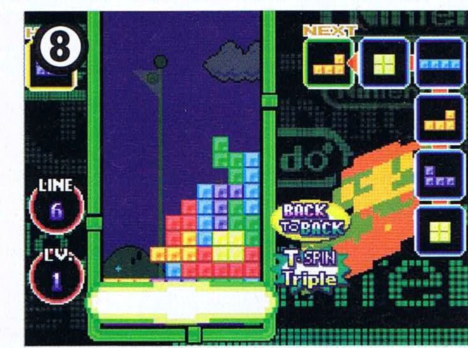
**6.** Because we set this one up with two T&L combos, we have the chance to perform a second one. As long as you don't clear any other lines before you get another T-block, you can score a double.

### STEP FOUR
**FINAL ATTACK**

**7.** By this time, your opponent will be watching your screen in awe. Not in this case, mind you, because we're doing this in the solo Marathon mode. Ahem. Honestly, this stuff is really tricky under pressure.

**8.** Same procedure as before – slide to the right, rotate anticlockwise, job's a good'un. Except this scores you a Back-To-Back T-Spin Triple, sending 7 lines of junk and making you, officially, the daddy (or mummy).



# TOP 20 NINT-ENDINGS

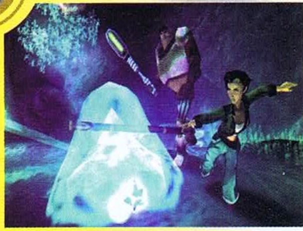
**The good things** that have come to an end… and some of the bad ones, too.





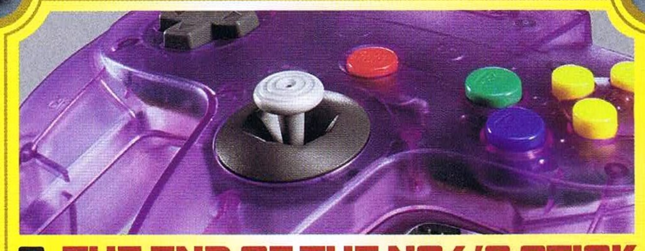

## 1. YOSHI'S ISLAND ENDING

Yes, we know we've harped on about this before. But it is, simply, the best Nintendo game ending ever. You dare to disagree? Yoshi hates you. How we cried when the stork delivered Baby Mario and Baby Luigi safely into the arms of their expectant parents in Mushroom Village – even today, on our eleventh viewing, our eyes still puff out the crusty salt deposits that our aged bodies call 'tears' (and our psychoanalysts call the result of a career in videogames journalism). It's that tinkly lullaby version of the *Super Mario Bros* end-level theme that does it. Except now it's all been ruined by Kittsy rightly pointing out: "Hey – weren't they born in New York?". Ruined, we tells ya!




## 2. BEYOND GOOD & EVIL'S GAME-ENDING BUG

If you thought the *actual* sequel-teasing finish to *BG&E* barely qualified as an ending, you're lucky you weren't cursed to see the thing grind to a halt 70% of the way through. A game-ruining bug – which infested unlucky Greener's copy along with thousands of others – meant that crucial character Double H simply disappeared, leaving you to wander the world aimlessly until you got bored, or earth was engulfed by the sun. And because you only had one save per memory card, the only way out was to quit, restart, and play the whole thing again. *Beyond Good & Evil*? More like beyond… er, evil.



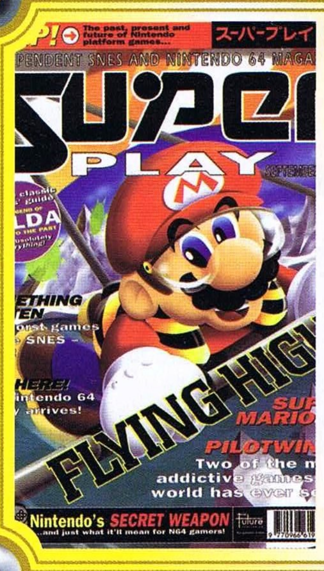
## 3. THE END OF THE N64'S STICK

Nintendo's joypads, designed by magic elves wielding sparkles deep inside the forest love, are *always* brilliant. But there was something *specially* special about the N64's pad – it made the switch to 3D gaming a pain-free process, and it looked like a three-sponged spaceship from the planet Ergonomic-5. Which might be why we have a special fondness for those little concentric circles on the end of the analogue stick: the same little friction-enhancers you'll find on the Gamecube's pad, but somehow better for being formed of hard, unforgiving plastic rather than the funny rubbery plastic that reminds us of touching a cow's heart in GCSE Biology lessons.



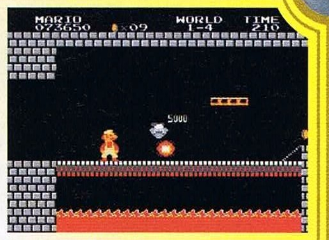

## 4. END OF MAJORA'S MASK'S THIRD DAY

We foresee a bright future where a cheering crowd swarms around a freshly-erected statue of the **NGC** team, etched with the message: "They were right about *Majora's Mask* being better than *Ocarina of Time* all along." Nowhere is *MM*'s superiority clearer than on the final night, as the colossal moon looms ready to crush Termina, and Koji Kondo's masterful synth skills make you genuinely shudder as the town guards gaze nervously skyward and the mayor weeps. The game ends with the lunatic lunar body squashing the town flat *with his giant nose*. What would Mystic Meg make out of that?




## 5. SUPER PLAY'S FINAL ISSUE

You've been seeing plenty of **NGC**'s hallowed predecessor in the pages of Timewarp, but month-matching considerations mean we've never been able to celebrate Super Play's final issue – which arrived in time to go page-mental over the Nintendo 64's launch in Japan, and *Super Mario 64*. Sure, Super Nintendo games were rarer than a crab in a vat of beans, hence the sprawling catalogue of every platform game *ever*. But anyone who'd grown up with the mag would have been weepy over the end of SP. Or maybe that was just their eyes reacting to the colour-drenched '90s design.

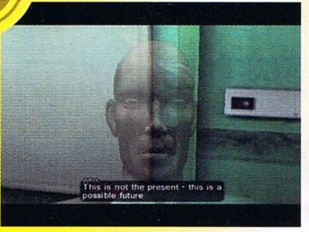
## 6. SUPER MARIO BROS DEATHS

Game characters these days die like an actor who knows his mum's watching: we can't be far from Lara Croft clutching her heart and wailing, "I die! I die!" in the manner of an Eastender's actor gone thespo. Way back when, Mario bought the farm with unfussy professionalism: arms and legs out, face front and centre, and simply 'bounce' off the screen – to that unforgettable 'Do-do-dodo-do-dodo-bom-bombom'. Even better: big ol' Bowser went exactly the same way. Which is only right: a look of shock or surprise isn't allowed for a dino who's standing right in front of the switch that kills him.




## 7. ETERNAL DARKNESS'S FAKE ENDING

We blame *Eternal Darkness* for the fact we're waking up these days literally eating the blanket with fear – sanity effects like the blood seeping from the walls, or the sinister chuckling of unseen children, mean we can only get a good night's sleep when in a room filled with puppies and baby panda bears. The sanity effect that affected us most, though: the game suddenly switching to a 'Thanks for playing this demo!' screen, causing our stomachs to twist in fear that we'd been sold an unfinished version of the game. Of course, within a few seconds, it was back to normal play. We shake our fists at you!





## 8. SECOND SIGHT'S FINAL LEVEL

From the beginning, you're led to believe that John Vattic is somehow changing the present by reliving his past. Just before the final level, you get the brilliant truth: the present is actually the *future* – but only *possible* futures that are being altered by what you're doing in the present (or what you thought was the past). Right? You feel your brain catch fire like an overworked toaster, of course – but the compensation is a final level that has Vattic flip-flopping in and out of time, seeing ghostly visions of what people in his theoretical futures are doing. Or will do. Er, *would* do. Never mind.



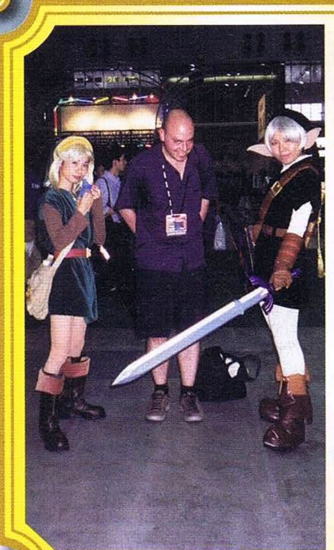


## 9. THE END OF TITUS

Now, we're not trying to be cruel here: when publisher Titus went down in 2004, it did so owing a lot of people a big stash of cash. But – finding out Titus was dead was like hearing God had decided to abolish paper cuts. Not since the final instalments of soap opera dirge Sunset Beach have we been so entirely taken aback, for the French publisher had been responsible for harnessing the power of pure evil and moulding it into games for the Nintendo 64 – *Superman 64*, *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*, *Blues Brothers 2000*. They kept us in jokes for a good few years, but the million-plus people who paid £50 to Solve Lex's Maze weren't so amused.

# NINT-ENDINGS

"You could never have too many digital chronometers"



## 10. GOODBYE SPACEWORLD

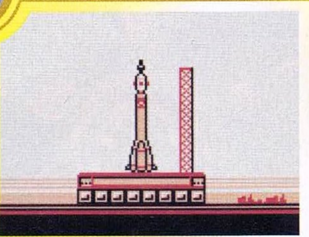
As E3 prepares to scream games at us until the skin on our faces is torn off, it's with some sadness that we recall Nintendo's annual Spaceworld show (aka Shoshinkai). Picture this: a big featureless warehouse half an hour outside central Tokyo, filled with demo pods of games, hot fish, a woman dressed as Link and smoking a cigarette, and enough Japanese children to form an army big enough to take over Legoland. Spaceworld gave us our first sightings of Gamecube, GBA, *Majora's Mask* (we'll keep going on about it…), *Yoshi's Story* and *Super Mario 64* – but in 2002, it was cancelled, never to return.

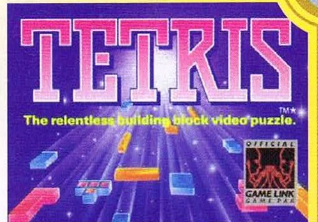




## 11. COMPLETING THE SAVAGE LABYRINTH

Remember this? Hidden beneath Outset Island, *Wind Waker*'s most notorious mini-quest is either your favouritest bit of Zelda since *all of Majora's Mask* (we're not done yet, see); or the part you'd like Shigsy to be forced to play forever in his own personal hell (where he's also bald). Fifty-one floors – *fifty-one floors* – of muscle-achingly tough monster battles, with na'er a heart piece or bomb in sight. Floor 31 was where you could breathe a sigh of relief – it was home to the piece of Triforce map you'd come for. Then: daylight, as sweet as emerging from prison on a sunny day… on a bank holiday!

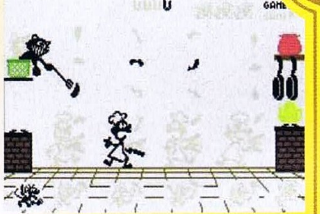





## 12. TETRIS'S ROCKET ENDING

It's a shame Nintendo couldn't build better rewards than 'listening to music' into *Tetris DS*. Because the one thing everyone remembers about the original Game Boy *Tetris* – apart from, er, the music – is the rocket you'd see taking off after you'd racked up 100,000 points in the normal game (or for finishing Mode B on level 9 – we've done our research, all right?). For 200,000 points, you'd get to see a proper NASA-style space shuttle taking off – perhaps to ferry all known copies of *Tetris* to the moon, so that people would actually get some work done for a change. We're looking at Kittsy when we say this, though perhaps it's rude to point fingers so directly. (Nah…)



## 13. THE END OF GAME & WATCH

14th October 1991 marked the end of one of Nintendo's most successful game machines: the Game & Watch. Gunpei Yokoi had the idea in 1980: a small, LED-based electronic game that would let you play games while enjoying '80s outdoor activities like graffiti-skating and breakdance-bubblegum. *And tell the time* because in the '80s, you could never have too many digital chronometers (well-chronicled in Michael Jackson videos). G&W gave birth to the D-Pad (then known as the "Control Cross"), and had the double-screen idea years before the DS. *Mario Juggler*, the 59th and final Game & Watch, was that October release – a Mario-added version of the original G&W, *Ball*.





## 14. KING KONG'S ALTERNATE ENDING

You have to admire Ubisoft Montpellier's 'chutzpah'. If you finished *King Kong*, and then replayed it with over 250,000 points, you'd unlock an alternative final level: Jack in a plane, shooting out the spotlights and planes gunning for Kong at the top of the Empire State Building. The result: Kong gets to lumber his way back to Skull Island – and no doubt interrupt the big knees-up the islanders and T-Rexs were holding to celebrate a happy future of not getting eaten. Incidentally, we'd also have enjoyed a second alternate ending, where Kong marries Jane and they have kids. Don't judge us.





## 15. CREAM THE RABBIT'S TAIL

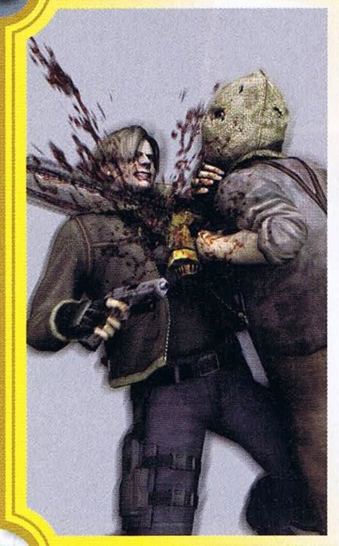
We're not sure we should mention this, as we're a little bit concerned about being misunderstood by various organisations. There's probably something very wrong – perhaps even illegal in some countries – about our favourite videogame tail being the one on the end of Sonic's girly pal Cream. It's basically your common-or-garden rabbit's tail, but plopped on the behind of a cutesy little wabbit who owns a Chao called 'Cheese' and *flies by flapping her ears*. Of course, we've wanted to give its delicate fluffiness a little squeeze, but… we've probably said enough. "As long as we stick together, we can do *anything*!" she grins at us in *Sonic Heroes*. Love you.





## 16. SUPER MARIO WORLD'S SECRETEST EXIT

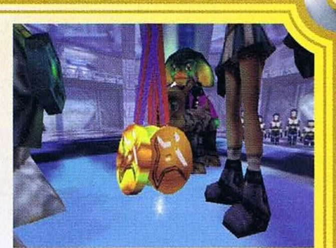
If you want proof that Shigsy probably sits in his office with his face lit from underneath, cackling grotesquely as he feeds nails to kittens, this is it: the evillest level ending of *all time*. The only way to reach the hidden exit on *Super Mario World*'s Cheese Bridge Area was to get to the end with a cape (which was no mean feat in itself) then take a running jump and control Mario's flight to dive *under* the level gate – a preposterously odd idea that *no-one* would conceivably have been able to discover without a tips guide, and which took an average of 813 eye-gouging attempts to pull off.



## 17. LEON KENNEDY'S HEAD

Well, it's technically the *top* of Leon Kennedy. But it's also, frequently, his end. Raccoon City's finest discovers more ways of losing his head in *Resident Evil 4* than medical science thought possible: chainsawed clean off at the neck, knocked off by a bloke with kitchen knives where his fingernails should be, melted away by a big insect vomiting up last night's drinks binge (mainly hydrochloric acid and coke, by the looks of things). When he's impaled on the end of that shambling body-spiked gimp, you can almost hear his head sigh with relief. You know – through its mouth.

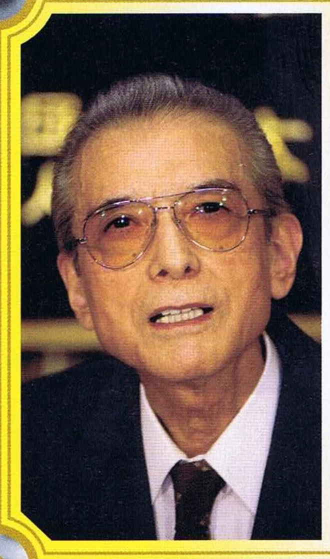




## 18. JET FORCE GEMINI'S ENDING

If *Yoshi's Island* has the best ending, then *Jet Force Gemini* has the plain oddest – a Jimmy Saville-alike popping up to award star-twins Juno and Vela a medal for saving the universe, proving once and for all that Rare had the strangest sense of humour in Twycross (and possibly the only sense of humour, too).

And then there were the odd and yet strangely entertaining credits, which showed the kids dancing at the disco like malfunctioning David Brent robots. Incidentally, six years after the game was released, we've only just realised that Rare were playing Da Vinci Code-style games with the names of levels like 'Rith Essa' and 'Eschebone'. Naughty.



## 19. THE END OF YAMAUCHI

He might have a face like an old towel and a temper to match (assuming it's an old, *angry* towel), but Hiroshi Yamauchi is the reason Nintendo aren't still just a little outfit in Kyoto making Disney playing cards. Taking control of the company in 1949 – coincidentally, the same year Soviet gymnast Natalia Kuchinskaya was born – he took a risk on electronic games and transformed Nintendo into the mad cash-churning factory it is today. When he left the board of directors in June 2005, leaving Satoru Iwata in charge, it was the end of an era. The end of an era of a very angry old man, shouting.





## 20. THE FINAL MARIO PARTY

The only one here that hasn't happened yet. But, man, are we going to be happy when it does.





With Mark Green



# THE FAMILY TREE

The sordid history of today's biggest games

## Sense of perspective

**A picture tells a thousand words, especially with 3D specs to look through. See how the visual aesthetic has violated your eye-sockets over the years…**





**3D WORLDRUNNER (1987)**
Before *Final Fantasy* powerbrains Squaresoft made a pact to see how high they could count in roman numerals, they sculpted a few games that *weren't* RPGs. *3D Worldrunner* was one: a space cowboy with a chronic case of 'the runs' making a heroic (and exhausting) trek around the eight othello-board planets of Solar System #517 – leaping over deadly fissures, dodging galactic sticks of rock and shooting Serpentbeasts, Meanies and, er, White Willies.

The twist: a pair of 3D glasses was packed into the box, allowing you to "bring the fight into your livingroom" – run the world in true 3D. It was a gimmick re-used for Square's more traditional speed-'em-up, *Rad Racer*, and it worked well. Or at least, it worked better than the other little gimmick. Our windmill-legged hero stopped for a quick breather when you paused the game – but looked for all the world like he was puffing away on a cigarette. Gillian McKeith would be horrified. If she played games. In 1987.



**CAPTAIN SKYHAWK (1989)**
Creative alien plan – let's invade Earth! – leads to smart Rare-created F-14 blast over the skies of a unique geometric world.



**BATTLETOADS (1991)**
Boss-eyed: the stone-hurling scrap at the end of level one was, bizarrely, viewed from the boss robot's point of view.




**BALLZ (1994)**
"To be the champion, you gotta play *Ballz*!" yelled the opening. Spot the Nintendo censorship there.



**CLAYFIGHTER (1993)**
*Mortal Kombat* popularised ingame fighters digitised from actors; *Clayfighter* used clay models. 'Funny'.



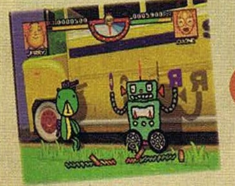



**MOTHER 2 / EARTHBOUND (1994)**
Hypnotic battle backgrounds were "mathematical graphs" – explains why we needed a cold compress afterwards.

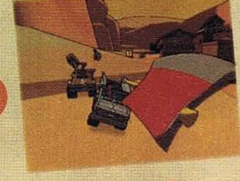


**YOSHI'S ISLAND (1995)**
Applause-worthy Ninty work of art that looked like a kid's misadventures with a pack of coloured crayons. Except when they inevitably shove one where they shouldn't.





**RAKUGA KIDS (1998)**
Japan-only N64 cutie. Kids' drawings of turret-headed bears and robots brought magically to life. To rip each other limb from limb.



**CEL DAMAGE (2001)**
Vehicle-based battling, and the very first game to employ cartoon-style cel-shading on a Nintendo console. Also: rubbish.

Gaming Family Trees, A Definitive Guide 2067

# RETRO NEWS

News rounded up from the world of retrogaming

## SOILED

This April Fools-related tale isn't exactly timely – we're transmitting to you from the past via the power of deadlines, after all. But we want to 'big' this 'up' all the same. In a sea of pathetic online jokes that missed the whole point of April 1st ("Pikmin 3 announced!", "Zelda delayed!"), ThinkGeek was our fantasy island. Their gag: a Grow Your Own 1Up Mushroom kit. "The packet claims that eating the 1Up Mushroom will grant 'immortal life beyond dreams of man'," they chortled – and, like all the best April foolery, it worked because we *wanted to believe.* Sigh.

■ **http://tinyurl.com/lnn89**

## MAKE AND DO

Remember those Pac Man bicycle lights from last issue? Over the last month, the site they live on – www.instructables.com – has become a hammering, sawing, screwdrivering haven of retro-tinged DIY projects. Take these fridge magnolights: just the thing for the retrogamer who has everything, including the ability to wrestle with "a 4.5 Volt / 500 milliAmp AC power adapter with magnets attached to both wires". Basically, *don't* try it, kids. Why not turn a Nintendo controller into a digicam memory card reader instead? Or build a wheelchair for a Dachshund?

■ **http://www.instructables.com**



## BLOCK CLOCK

We didn't have any room for this in Retro Tat, so we've squeezed it in here – we knew you'd want to drip saliva all over it and, after all, it *is* fresh out this month. It's a *Tetris* clock, see. A *Tetris* clock! You just know that when fabled clockmaker John Harrison was slaving away over the portable 'chronometer' that would revolutionise seabound mapmaking in 1737, it was all simply so that we'd be able to get a little timer with Tetronimoes tumbling down the screen 269 years later. It's a kitchen timer, not an alarm clock, mind, the thought of falling asleep *and* waking up seeing Tetris blocks falling before your eyes is just too much.

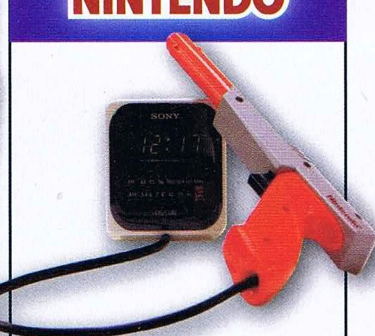
■ **http://amadana.com/product/mt123/mt123.html**







## SONY JOINS NINTENDO



Roger Ibar doesn't just have a name that makes him sound like Apple's next mp3 player, he's also the only person to ever think of combining old NES controllers and… digital clocks. He recently eBay-auctioned one of his 'Hard-Wired' pieces here (cleverly named 'Nintendo gun shoots Sony Digicube'), and – yes – the attached Zapper *is* used to control time. No wonder he's selling it: trying to set the alarm by turning the gun 135 degrees and pulling the trigger presumably led to too many rude awakenings at exactly 2:12.471am.

■ **http://tinyurl.com/oy2w7**

## LINK'S PAC

Simple idea, but we love it. *Zelda: The Collecting of Pills* is, simply, *Pac Man* done in the style of *The Legend of Zelda: A Link To The Past* – so you get Link instead of Pac, hearts instead of Power Pills, and those globby green Chu-Chus instead of the ghost-monsters of yore (complete with googly ghost-eyes). Hardly the most technically accomplished videogame to be delivered down your net-pipes, sure – but one blast of the "I got an item out of a chest!" theme (or whatever Shigsy calls it), and you'll be sold.

■ **http://tinyurl.com/njghn**



# TOP 5 JAPLISH

**The longest Japanese game names to lick your lips to…**




### FAMICOM DOUBUTSU SEITAI ZUKAN! KATTE NI SHIROKUMA MORI WO SUKUE NO MAKI! (NES)

Seems to be an RPG starring a polar bear wearing a necklace, dancing on a log. Translation? Involves the word "kitchen". We think. Erm.




### BISHOUJO SENSHI SAILOR MOON SUPER S ZENIN SANKA!! SHUYAKU SOUDATSUSEN (SUPER NINTENDO)

It's a *Sailor Moon* fighting game, basically. The title in English? A contest of some kind. Something to do with "prehistoric"? Next!




### DOWNTOWN NEKKETSU BASEBALL MONOGATARI BASEBALL DE SHOUFUDA! KUNIO-KUN (SUPER NINTENDO)

One of around 587 Japanese baseball games released on the SNES – this one stars the characters from *Dodge Ball Advance.*




### SD GUNDAM GAIDEN KNIGHT GUNDAM MONOGATARI 3 DENSETSU NO KISHI DAN (NES)

Typical Japanese RPG fare, except with a greater-than-usual complement of giant-headed robot-men. As for what the title means… let's move on.




### HOKUTO NO KEN 4 SHICHISEI HAKEN DEN HOKUTO SHINKEN NO KANATA HE (NES)

We've got absolutely no idea.

# RETRO TAT

**Plushing** pride…

Lucky this bit isn't called 'modern tat', or we'd have to show you Bandai's frankly frightening Nintendogs keyrings. Instead, you get the latest Banpresto-Ninty merch, and another reason to try and fire yourself straight over to Japan using a big catapult. *Cuddly Goombas wearing Mario, Luigi and Wario caps* – we want these, and we want them bad. You know they wouldn't look so cute if they didn't have that grumpy-eyebrowed face on – it's exactly the same look you'll be getting from your Japanese pen friend when you ask him to buy 173 of them and send them over to you via a little wooden raft on the cheap.

■ **http://tinyurl.com/ld4yl**



# THIS MONTH IN NINTENDO

This month, eleven years ago – **Super Play, June 1995**




△ Turns out the Antarctic isn't a great place to build a theme park. Silly us.




△ A big-nosed Willy Wonka with a hat seemingly made out of pastry was your guide to the game's ins and outs. Sinister? Yes.

theme PARK
BULLFROG PRODUCTIONS LTD
COPYRIGHT BULLFROG PRODUCTIONS LTD PUBLISHED BY OCEAN SOFTWARE LTD UNDER LICENSE FROM ELECTRONIC ARTS

# GAME OF THE MONTH
# THEME PARK
## SUPER NINTENDO

**The theme park of your dreams,** as created by you, with outside loos and park bullies censored by a paranoid Nintendo…

**WHAT'S THIS?** Peter Molyneux's *Sim City*-in-a-fairground. Originally a PC game, but brought screaming (downhill at about 80mph) to Super Nintendo.
**THE BIG DEAL:** "One of the most sophisticated, frustrating and downright enjoyable ways to kill time ever devised," said Super Play. The people behind revered masterpieces like *Populous* and *Syndicate* had crafted the Alton Towers sim of our dreams: plonk stalls and rides where you like, rig coconut shies for profit and watch the bouncy castle heaving under the weight of happy punters. The stat screens compared you with fictional parks like "Walt Winey", "Euro Trash" and – our favourite – "Frog World". And why don't *real* theme parks have chip stalls in the shape of a chip carton?
**FROM THE SAME TEAM AS:** Most of Bullfrog was subsumed into EA, or left with Molyneux when he formed offshoot Lionhead. But if you've played *The Movies* or *Black & White*, that's the *Theme Park* people talking.
**WHAT HAPPENED NEXT:** As well as inspiring *Rollercoaster Tycoon*, *Theme Park* spawned an odd sequel on other formats: *Theme Hospital*. Copies of Super Nintendo *Theme Park* are now £1.50 on eBay. Oh dear.
**AND:** Midland Bank – that's what HSBC was back in the day – sponsored some versions in order to encourage kids to sign up for a 'young persons' account.

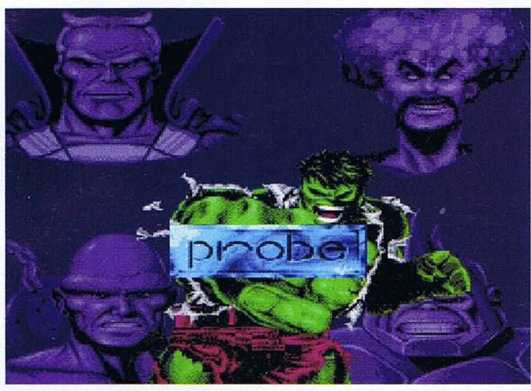
THE BOUNCY CASTLE IS ALWAYS AN ATTRACTION, ESPECIALLY AT THIS PRICE. AND IT'S YOURS WITH FREE STAIN-RESISTANT RUBBER.

CASTLE

| | |
|---|---|
| EXCITEMENT | OKAY |
| RELIABILITY | BAD |
| CAPACITY | 4 |
| | |
| COST | 2000 |

# Everyone was playing...

## THE INCREDIBLE HULK
## SUPER NINTENDO



△ Hulk battled many a villain: including Mr Broccoli, top-right.



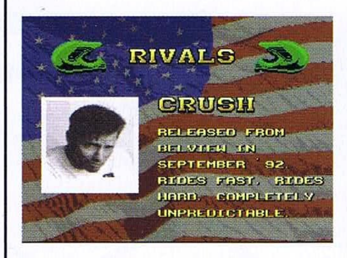
△ You wouldn't like him when he's... smashing up robots.

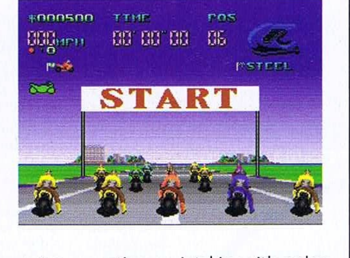
**After Banner committed psychic suicide**, Hulk was meant to make friends with the aliens, not beat them to a lurid pulp...


Embarrassingly, this re-release shot to number two in the charts without Super Play having even reviewed it. It probably would have been our *worst* game of the month if they'd actually scored it: aliens invade Earth; Hulk smashes aliens; the end. The less-than-jolly green giant had only a handful of moves, as well as a near complete inability to punch anything he was standing right next to. A few hits would morph him back into Bruce Banner – who'd thoughtfully only packed a pair of ripped shorts and a gun (loaded with a less than helpful two whole bullets) for the journey. Incredibly, it even had The Rhino as a boss: he's appeared in every Marvel game since 1997.

# Worst game...

## FULL THROTTLE ALL-AMERICAN RACING
## SUPER NINTENDO




Seeing a whopping *ten* motorcyclers on the start line must have been quite a buzz back in the day. But it only took a few seconds for your rivals to disappear behind you, leaving you to 'enjoy' one of the easiest cc'ers ever made. But wait! *Full Throttle* had something extra: a section on jetskis, with poles to steer through, nuclear waste to dodge, *and* rival riders who tried to kick you right in the petrol tank. Best bit: long bridges over water, but the ability to ride all over the blue stuff on either side. "Remember to put it in a bin-liner, as the dustmen won't take it away otherwise." 32%

## OTHER REVIEWS THIS MONTH

**Hagane Bizarre Contra**
Shooter starring a bloke with a) a helmet and b) the funniest walk on Nintendo.
**74%**

**James Pond 3**
Shameless 111-level 'homage' to *Super Mario World*, starring a robot fish.
**77%**

**Putty Squad**
Tip-top platform fun with a squidge of clay that could stretch, punch, flatten and inflate.
**89%**

# Other news...

Old news, tastefully repackaged...

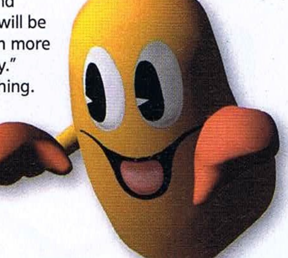
## RARE BOUGHT

How times change. Nintendo bought 25% of coders Rare – who were then best-known for *Killer Instinct*. But get this: Rare boss Tim Stamper said the deal would "focus the 'eye' of the burgeoning videogame industry right on England." In retrospect, a sly hint (that everyone missed) that they were just starting work on *GoldenEye*.




## SHIGSY SPEAKS

We interviewed the man Miyamoto, who was largely zip-mouthed about the upcoming Nintendo 64. But he did reveal that *Pac Man* was his favourite videogame, that the N64 would be the cheapest next-gen hardware (it was – eventually), and that "Mario's moustache, hat and nose will be drawn more clearly." Smashing.



## YOU'RE JOKING

Super Play's 'Kindly Leave The Stage' reader jokes spluttered on. This month: "Two guys were looking at some shirts in a shop window. One had just pointed out to his mate, 'That's the one I'd get' when a cyclops came round the corner and kicked his head in." A-ha... what?




**Bring back the memories – or fill in the brainholes with new ones**

# CLASSIC BOXART

## RIVAL TURF SNES (1992)




Where do we start? If you're old enough to remember when Mark Wahlberg had a Funky Bunch, you might be able to forgive the chap on the right, despite the jaunty backwards baseball cap, his five-sizes-too-big jacket, and what looks to us like a *leotard*. As for his friend – is that some kind of '80s 'hand-language'? Or is it the look of a man threatening to 'deck' anyone who mentions he's got a handkerchief tied around his forehead? "They won't stop punching, kicking and slamming until they clear the trash from every alley in America!" Such ambition!

# CLASSIC CUTSCENE

## BLASTER MASTER : NES (1988)

The opening cutscene showed a boy watching his pet toad leap away, mutate into The Biggest Toad On Earth – courtesy of a radioactive pillar in the garden – then lead his owner to a futuristic tank down a tunnel that appears from nowhere. The tank's name? "Subatomic Omni-directional Probative Hyper-responsive Indomitable Abdicator (3rd Design) Nora MA-01". Brilliant.







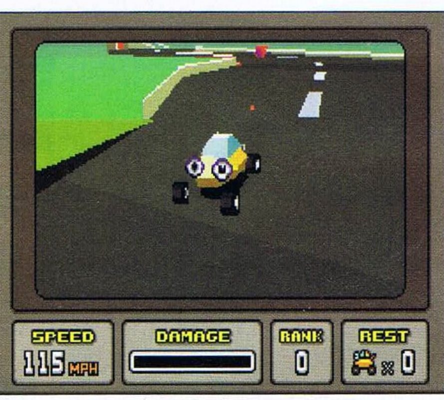




# CLASSIC CAMEO

## ARWING STUNT RACE FX: SUPER NINTENDO

British developers Argonaut – who'd created *Stunt Race FX* immediately after polishing off the original *Star Fox* – just couldn't help themselves. If, by careful steering, you knocked over three of the *Star Fox* posters lining the Night Cruise course of this low-selling racer, an Arwing would scream overhead and drop a powerup for your buggy, in full juddery eye-bothering 1994-era 3D. Presumably it wasn't piloted by Slippy Toad, or you'd have watched the thing do three unplanned barrel rolls before crashing spectacularly straight into a mountainside.




△ Er, we couldn't get this cheat to work. So here's a picture of a bug-eyed car instead. Cute, eh? (Runs.)

# CAREER GRAPH: BOB-OMB

Something of an explosive temper.

+5 +4 +3 +2 +1 0 -1 -2 -3 -4 -5

**Super Mario Bros 2 (NES, 1988)** Walk a bit; explode; job done. Manual shows them with *arms*. Get it away!

**Super Mario Bros 3 (NES, 1990)** Someone's rammed a key up their back. Possibly as a maverick hiccups cure.

**Super Mario World (SNES, 1990)** Float gently inside bubbles or attached to parachutes. Then blow up big time.

**Zelda: Link's Awakening (GB, 1993)** Escapes the Mushroom Kingdom and blows away a whole new audience.

**Super Mario Bros The Movie (1993)** Authentic look. But Reebok product placement? The shame, the shame.

**Super Mario RPG (SNES, 1996)** Introducing Rob-omb, a relative of Bob-omb. Big difference: purple feet.

**Super Mario 64 (N64, 1996)** We never tired of making them give chase so they'd crash into one another.

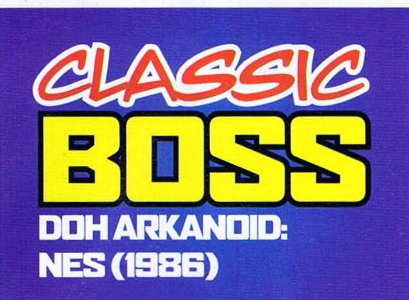
**Mario Party (N64, 1998)** Aim cannons at Mario. Because the ability to blow yourself up isn't effective enough?

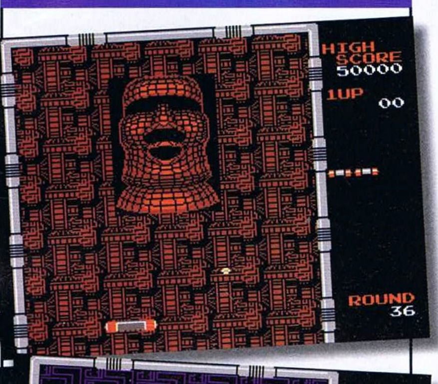
**Mario Golf (GBC, 1999)** Cutest Bob-ombs ever. If there's anyone with cuter feet, we've yet to see them.

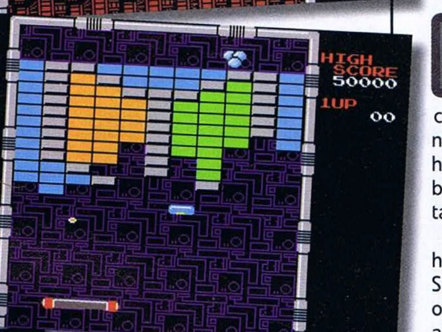
**Super Mario Sunshine (GC, 2002)** Haunting eyeless countdown-faced timebombs chucked by evil moles. Help!

**Mario Golf Toadstool Tour (GC, 2003)** Bob-ombs on the fairway? The ground staff aren't doing their jobs properly.

REER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CA




Arkanoid was basically 1979 brick-basher *Breakout* with knobs on – literally, in fact, because it came with a little plug-in analogue dial for accurate control. And yet, it actually had a *story*. "After the mothership Arkanoid is destroyed, a spaceship Vaus scrambled to blah, blah, blah, blabbidy blah", or words to that effect. And having a plot meant that there had to be a resolution: a great big face named Doh whose only weakness was (go on, see if you can guess, can you, can you guess?) having a teeny-tiny little ball directed straight in the chops. Doh is, of course, now pronounced in the Homer Simpson style by people who think they're funny.




△ Perhaps Bill Gates' nightmares look a bit like this.

# CLASSIC LEVEL
## CALIFORNIA SPEED
### N64 (1999)

Now, *California Speed* was *not* great. It handled like no racer we've ever played, came with a blotchy 'radar' of nearby cars that top cryptologists have yet to figure out, and could be completed in the same time it takes to say the game's name.

But what Midway's game *did* have was imagination. Take the Silicon Valley track. Vast swathes of grassy highway and a trackside airport with three 747s casually parked right next to the road: pretty, but hardly groundbreaking. Then, suddenly – *driving inside an electronic chip*. For reasons known only to Atari, you'd approach an ominous-looking grey building halfway around the track, then find yourself racing past giant transistors, scooting through electrical wires, and whizzing past blinking LEDs the size of phone boxes. Its climax saw you catapulted through a little hole on a PC keyboard socket.

Silicon Valley was just the beginning. Other mad moments included pelting along a rollercoaster, racing through the Monteray Bay Aquarium and – showing *Mario Kart Double Dash!!*'s Mushroom Bridge a thing or too – heading straight up the actual *suspension cables* of the Golden Gate Bridge. But nothing quite beats the sudden delight of being transported, for absolutely no reason, into a machine. And you can *really* upset your geeky friends by insisting that all data is transferred by tiny blokes driving microscopic hatchbacks.

# LOST CLASSIC
## UMIHARA KAWASE: SUPER NINTENDO (1994)



If you only play one 'lost classic', make it this one. Only released in Japan, it plays a bit like the superb *Ninja Cop* on GBA, with a little girl swinging from platforms using her rubberised grapple/fishing line implement. Of course, *Ninja Cop* doesn't have fish that look like they've flopped out of a brain fever, or vegetables the size of articulated trucks – or, indeed, speedrunners battering it to the point of completing it in *two minutes flat*. It's a beautifully slick game, with a pleasing sense of physics that'll have you writing a love letter to Newton – and the opportunity to stick a sharp spike in a weasel.

**Mario Kart Double Dash!! (GC, 2003)** Frequently fingered by the greasy evil-hands of Wario and Waluigi.

**Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door (GC, 2004)** Admiral Bobbery helps Mario. By launching him out of a cannon.

**Zelda: The Minish Cap (GBA, 2004)** Once activated, they go a little crazy. No kidding – *red eyes* and all.

**Super Mario 64 DS (DS, 2004)** Rounding up pink and black Bob-ombs like explosive, two-legged, spherical cattle.

**Mario Party Advance (GBA, 2005)** King Bob-omb explains the 'Bob-omb Mafia'. And you wonder why we hated it?

**Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time (DS, 2005)** Not called 'Lethal Bob-ombs' for nothing. It's because they're lethal.

**Super Mario Strikers (GC, 2005)** Power-up able to blow the game wide open – as well as the players' bones.

**Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix (GC, 2005)** Need to be seen off with those flaming fireballs. Disco inferno!

**Mario Kart DS (DS, 2005)** King Bob-omb returns – and gets blown up by Bob-Ombs! How d'ya like them apples?

?

EER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAR

# 30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

# MAILBOX

## EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Don't know how to work a pen? Cat *literally* got your tongue? Then get online and mail us at...

**ngc@futurenet.co.uk**

We'll be printing your letters in our brand new Wii-o-mag. Next month...

## STAR LETTER

If you send us the best letter of the month, you'll receive a shiny new Gamecube (or GBA/DS) game from our bulging sack of brand new games. Lovely.

### "Sprawling"

My games collection has had such a breath of fresh air with *Animal Crossing: Wild World*. The open-ended gameplay where I can do whatever I want, whenever I want, and just the variety of things to do; trying to catch all the different types of fish, digging up fossils to recreate all those dinosaurs, catching each and every type of butterfly, making friends with all the townsfolk, slaving away to pay off The Nookmeister and so much more that I probably haven't seen yet.

The thing is, I wonder if this could be something more... Given the fact that Nintendo are embracing online gaming this time, instead of basing *Animal Crossing* around one simple town, why not venture into entire countries and continents of a massive virtual planet? Explore a huge, sprawling city while hundreds of other players do the same in real time, enter shops and buy all kinds of things that wouldn't necessarily be available in your home town and bring them back with you – even start your own business and become rich selling wares from other countries to locals. While in another country, send postcards to your friends back home, and have to deal with jetlag and such on your return home. It would be a game of epic proportions, but would still feature all the various little things that make the *Animal Crossing* experience what it is.

The possibilities are endless, really, and if Nintendo could pull off something of this scale, the Wii would be a very strong contender in today's gaming arena.

**Andrew Gleeson, Berkshire**

***I've no idea whether such a thing is possible, but if it is then it would tell the world 'Wii is the future' more effectively than any graphics demo ever could. Ed***

## Bonus Letters

I just thought you'd like to see what reading your publication for all these years has done to my mind-box.
Jamie McMeekin, Gerrards Cross
***It isn't pretty. Ed***

Which leads me to believe the Super Nintendo 64 is the worst 64 bit system ever (yes, even worse than the Atari Jaguar) or you've made a mistake.
Jaimie Nicholls, Doncaster
***Mistekes? Hare? Ed***

Please don't send Diddy through the post.
Susannah Gill, via email
***I usually send him through the water mains, so he oozes out of your taps. Ed***

If only my Gran were here to see this act of pure love.
Tom Cooper, Gloucester
***Surely the stuff of nightmares. Ed***

Nearly every game released being a squeal of some sorts.
Steven Crossley, Bury
***Weeee! Ed***

You had a big sofa to gather around.
Peter Leonard, via email
***We chucked it out when it became infested with Alan Maddrell. Ed***



### "Straight copy"

One of my favourite GBA games is *Advance Wars*. I was delighted when Nintendo made a DS version, and even today I still play it more than any of my other games. I'm still waiting for them to make *Advance Wars* for the Gamecube (*Battalion Wars* does not count) or even Wii.

Anyway, one day while I was surfing the internet, I was horrified to see that Sony has decided to copy *Advance Wars*, give it better graphics and make it more lifelike, with *Field Commander* for the PSP. This is so typical. Nintendo makes a successful game and somebody else does a straight copy with a few changes. What's worse is it's not even going to be on Gamecube.

***Thomas Philpot, Cambs***

***The* Wars *series has been around since the late 1980s, so it has taken a long time for anyone to make a decent copy. Incidentally, the office PSP expert just told me the Sony version looks 'shat' so I don't think* Advance Wars *has too much to worry about. Ed***



**HONOURABLE MENTIONS**

Thanks to veryone who wrote letters, 'fired off' emails and heaved ransom-note bricks through our windows this month, including (but not limited to): Gilles Reuse, Belgium; Steven Kayne, High Wycombe; Joshua Jasper, Leicester; Daniel Lee, Newport; Elliot Kruszynski, Gloucester; Chris Bowman, via email; Kimmo Laakso from chilly Finland; Craig Shipton, Crewe; Matt, Erdington; Alex West, Newbury; Dom Whittall, via email; Tony Pang,

## "Stocking"

I am concerned with the decreasing number of Gamecube games in shops. My local Game has completely stopped stocking Gamecube, apart from pre-owned. Also, I've been told my local Gamestation is stopping stock of Gamecube once the current lot has been sold. The only place where I can get games offline has everything at the ludicrous £40 tag. This could be good, as GC games might come down in price, but having to wait an extra few days for *Zelda* to come in the post – I don't think so!
***Chris Bounds, Bognor Regis***

***If you pre-order from some of the larger online retailers, you can often get your game delivered on the day of release. Then again, I ordered a DS Lite online and had to wait more than a month. Swings and roundabouts. Hope that's of some use to you. Ed***

## "Arsed"

I'm tired of Nintendo's half-arsed approach to the DS – a brilliant console that is full of potential. I stupidly bought it thinking when games like *Animal Crossing* and *Mario Kart* came out with Wi-Fi it would be the most enjoyable and unique console out there. But for some unknown reason, they left out some of the best aspects.

In *Animal Crossing*, writing letters is supposed to be something really fun. It was in the Gamecube version but now, as we all know, you can only receive letters while online. Something else you failed to cover in your review is the amazingly short space for you to write anything while playing the game online. Talking in your little village, with your little house, in your own perfect society, sounds like great fun until you realise that you can't even write more than one line of text – the equivalent of saying 'how are you today?'

And the amazing mic Nintendo added to the DS – another great tool for online fun that they left out of the game entirely. Smart move on Nintendo's part. It was the one thing that could have saved the game from being a remake of the original with a crap online mode.

*Mario Kart* – they left out the best tracks from the N64 game, thereby making it a very disappointing online experience. The game might be very good with the new tracks, but why leave out all this great stuff? *Metroid* is the only thing that I'm looking forward to on this console now.

In my eyes it's only a matter of time before Sony starts running the handheld market. This letter may sound very negative, but to be honest the only game I have enjoyed on the DS is *Sonic Rush*. Everything else isn't up to the standard I expected. At least there's *Zelda* still to come, so it isn't all bad. But I really think Nintendo needs to look into what the fans want a bit more.

***John Cross, Twickenham***

***Cheer up! You'll never see something like Xbox Live on the DS, because Nintendo doesn't want players to be intimidated, insulted or upset while playing online. That's why there's no voice chat. That's why you can only interact with people you trust enough to share Friend Codes with.***

***Have a crack at* Halo 2 *on the Xbox, which became a wasteland of abusive, thuggish behaviour very quickly after launch, and is now the last place new players are likely to find good, friendly online fun. Then try telling me Nintendo didn't have the right idea with the Wi-Fi connection. It might not be as full-featured, but at least nobody is likely to come away from an online session in tears, having learned 20 interesting facts about their mum.***

***As for why they cut some bits out of* Mario Kart *and* Animal Crossing*, there are technical limitations on DS… as well as the need to sell sequels a couple of years down the line. Ed***



## Bonus Letters

In issue 1 you had a picture of Bill in the *Lylat Wars* Special Investigation and captioned it as General Pepper.
**Alexander Davies, Llandeilo**
***Bah. Rumbled. One more month and we'd have gotten away with it. Ed***

I have spotted a rather large mistake with both **NGC** Issue 117 and 118. For some bizarre reason, they appear to be held together by a pair of staples rather than the sturdier spine glue combo.
**The Inevitable Darker, Somewhere**
***Funny like a clown, Mr Darker. Ed***

I beleive Nintendo are making a wise dicision by releasing Revolution with less powerful graphics to suit the price range because HD televions are too expensive at the moment to buy for good graphics, but what I whould love to see ninty do is when Hi Def TVs become cheeper is to give those XXXbox360 and Gaystation3 owners a real kick in the teeth for laughing at Revolution's less potent graphics by releasing an expansion pack (like N64s) to make Revolutions graphics much more stronger then either of those two fecking consoles, because nintendo is the land of opertunities.
**Andrew Dixon, via email**
***Stop it, Shigsy. You're embarrassing yourself again. Ed***

The Wii will be *way* better. It will be so better that it will beat both the Xbox 360 *and* PS3 to the ground and kick sand in their faces.
**Chris Sandy, Alton**
***Super! I can't wait. Ed***

## "Expansion"

On reading Alexander Davies's letter about DS expansion paks (issue 118), another idea for them hit me. I was fishing to pay off my debt to that loanshark Nook on *Wild World* when I thought that the game




Who was it that described *Mario Kart DS* in the 'If you like this…' box for Sonic Riders as 'Team-based Sonic that's not entirely successful' and does he still work for you?
**JP Godfrey, London**

***Jes Bickham, and not for much longer. Ed***

This one actually made me laugh. On page 39, issue 118, you reviewed *Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney*. A good review, but sadly you missed out on rating the Visuals, Sound, Mastery and Lifespan. But I guess saying it's 'Wackier than Ally McBeal' pretty much sums it all up.
**Sean Chriscole, Orrell**

***Jeepers! It was fine when I sent it to the printers. Here's what you missed (and as you're the only person who spotted it, this is just for you) Ed***

**6# VISUALS**
Nice manga-esque visuals, but it's all a bit static#

**5# SOUNDS**
The constant tapping of text-scrolling, but jaunty tunes#

**6# MASTERY**
The cleverness is in the implementation, not the technology#

**8# LIFESPAN**
Five fat cases to crack – it'll last you ten hours at least#

Orpington; Heather Deruelle, via email; Barney Williams, Bath; Kevin Grant, London; Simon Wardle, via email; Tom Pilkington, via email; Charlie Fisher, via email; Sarah Reid, Manchester; Daniel Davidson, via email; Alan O'Brien, via email; William Benjamin, via email; Clive Draper, via email; Steve Brown, Macclesfield; Jeremy Jones, via email; Jordan Crownshaw, Luton; Colúm McClelland, Co Down; Seán Matthews, Tullow; Gary Maylin, Isle of Man; Howard Webster, via email; David Lawless, Milton Keynes; Jamie Morgan, via email; Daniel O'Sullivan, via email; Paul Galvin, Ireland; Mark Treviso, via email; Y Moreau, via email; Johann Keuper, via email; Jonathan Randall, Sunderland. Thanks for writing, folks. See you next time *(sob)*.




could be made even bigger and better with an expansion pak.

Alright, so there's already a lot on that tiny little DS cart, but an expansion could make it so much more. A few of my favourite pieces of furniture are, as far as I'm aware, missing from the DS version (the Mario and Luigi statuettes for example, which take pride of place on my GC town), and I'd love to have the little island like there was on the GC version. Oh, and from what I've heard from friends overseas, the amount of festivals is, in fact, lacking. Most of them are just lame and repeat themselves (for example Yay Day, which crops up six times a year and just involves giving compliments to each other). I loved Halloween on GC and wouldn't mind it being in the DS version at all.

Of course, this is severely unlikely to happen, if at all. But it's just a thought.
***Sam Harby, Sheffield***

***That would be fantastic. If Nintendo released some kind of memory card for DS, maybe we could download extra content for all sorts of games. Ed***

## "Copy said"

Two thoughts occurred to me the other day. The first was regarding the Wii's retro download service. Since the games can be saved to SD memory cards (and thus saved to a PC), could we then copy said games on to a blank DVD to save on SD memory card space? (DVD data is harder to lose or accidentally erase). The obvious problem – illegal game trading – is an easy thing to avoid. If the Wii gave each user a unique game number that was permanently assigned to their console, and players had to create a profile (like on the Xbox 360), then all the game would have to do is match those details to the original console it was downloaded onto. If the details are incorrect, the game locks.

The second thought concerned the DS. It has been said that it is Wi-Fi compatible with Wii. Does this mean we could see some blank DS cards and be able to download GB, GBC and some GBA games via the net? A very cool prospect indeed.
***Ade, via email***

# CREATIVE CORNER

**For the far-reaching artistic talents of the average and not-so-average reader...**

## "Drew"

I drew it myself.
Liam Whiting, Oldham

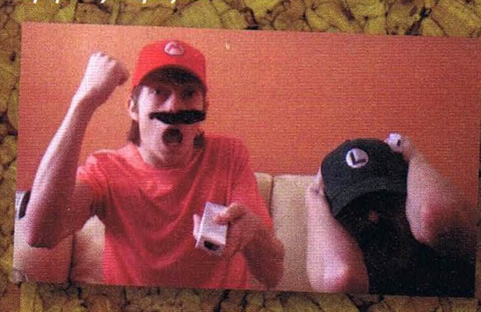
***So you did. Nifty. Ed***




## "Spanked"

I thought I'd send you a few photos I've made using some cardboard, a couple of hats and Photoshop. Scenario: Mario has just spanked Luigi's arse yet again at multiplayer Wii *GoldenEye* on Licence To Kill setting.
Marc Wood, Norwich

***Top quality cosplay. Ed***

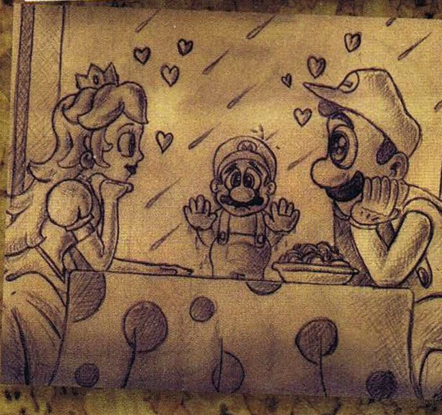


## "Romantic"

I've just read this month's issue and was slightly shocked by the lack of anything good in Creative Corner. All is not lost. Here are two drawings I was going to send months ago. The first is Mario versus Sonic, the second a woodblock print style drawing of Luigi and Peach on a romantic date while Mario stands outside in the rain, wondering why he never thought of that.
Matt Wyles, Hove

***Why isn't Luigi sharing his food with Peach? The cad. Ed***







## "Phone"

This is the pic of Link I drew whilst on the phone. Hope you like it, took me three hours but I think it came out pretty good.
Kirsty Hughes, via email

***You spent three hours on the phone? Ed***

## "Say"

I don't really have anything to say so here's a picture of everybody's favourite bounty hunter, Samus! Hope you like it.
George Maris, Seaford

***Nice tentacles. Ed***

## "Girlfriends"

Here's a drawing of Horinger Z with his girlfriend Rosie (a cleaning robot). I have also invented girlfriends for Dribble, Spitz, Orbulon, Dr Crygor, Mike and, er, ROB. Interested?
Christina R Weston, London

***Can I have one, too? Ed***



***The days of downloadable DS content may be some way off, but I'm sure you'll be able to store encrypted Wii games on a PC or elsewhere.* Ed**

## "Actions"

As you know, the Nintendo Wii controller is like a TV remote, and it's quite worrying. I like the old design because it's just like holding a Game Boy or a DS, and is easy to use with two hands opposite each other, rather than above each other.

I also like the idea of having all the buttons within a quick jab of the thumb. And the analogue stick should be attached to the rest of the controller, not hanging there while you jab away.

When the Gamecube was first made, the controller wasn't a huge difference from the Nintendo 64, which was great. It was a cool controller that I loved playing games with, and I'm sure many people out there agree with me.

The only thing that I'm looking forward to is the actions you can use with it, such as the rowing boat, and using it as a sword. Do you know of any more actions you can perform with the Nintendo Wii controller?

***Richard Ewan, Reading***

***You can fish and shoot and point and grab. And if you don't like it, you can always plug in a Gamecube controller.* Ed**



## "Whack"

My room is tiny! How the hell are me and my friends going to play four-player Smash Bros in my tiny little room? So I was just wondering, does Wii come with a free room, because I'll need one, preferably a big one!

By the end of our first go I reckon we'll have more injuries than they do in a football season! We're going to whack each other with the controller, probably knocking each other out, which actually isn't a bad idea for winning.

Nintendo are announcing new features to do with it, could this be it? A free giant room for everyone who buys a Wii on the launch day! Or, even better, a nurse that stands watching and waiting for a broken bone or leg! But anyway, I'll queue for my console and games, and pre-order a nurse so that she can fix us all up after the inevitable war.

***Tony Southion, London***

***Maybe Wii could be jointly sponsored by Bupa and an estate agent.* Ed**

## "Cheese"

I am concerned that Nintendo are going to try to use the Wii to make money from old games, and that they're going to push the download service rather than use the old games to sell Wii on its own merits.

I'm not being stingy – I'll be happy to pay for classic games when the time comes. The issue here is the ever more alarming console wars, and the fact that Nintendo should be throwing everything they have – which is a lot – in order to remain secure.

PS Hilcott-upon-Cheese has two Ts.

***Henry Bailey, Hilcott-upon-Cheese***

***You'll probably be able to collect reward points for the odd free game, and maybe the machine will come pre-loaded with some essential classics.* Ed**

## "Franchises"

The Gamecube is dead. The last good Gamecube game we will see is *Twilight Princess*, but most people will play it on the Wii anyway. But it was certainly not a failure. I have many games for the Gamecube (even more than for the N64), and I love most of them. But what I do not like is that most of those games are sequels or spin-offs from old franchises. Also, I haven't seen many good games from other companies. For example, have you seen *Shadow Of The Colossus, Katamari Damacy, God Of War* and *Halo*, games that were all considered fantastic by the press?

Yes, we have *Resident Evil 4, Prince Of Persia, Viewtiful Joe*, and *Beyond Good & Evil*, but none of them are exclusives, so you don't need a Gamecube for them. Nintendo still thinks that they can attract people just with *their* games. I think that Nintendo really needs to be good and exclusive from other companies. This is the whole reason why the Gamecube was not a success, sales-wise. Also Nintendo must not only change the way of playing games, but also the games themselves. I love the franchises, but I also want to see totally new worlds, with totally new characters, totally new gameplay, and totally new music. If you buy a *Mario* game, you always know what to expect. I want to be surprised again.

This is what I want to see: one *Mario* platformer, one *Mario* RPG, one *Mario Kart*, one *Starfox* (a good one this time), one or two *Zeldas*. For the rest, only new things, and good exclusive games from other companies. Only this way can Nintendo become the market leader again, otherwise the Wii will be the second console for most people.

***Henrie van Meurs, Holland***

***Your list of 'most wanted' Wii games reads much like the Gamecube's back catalogue. Except you forgot* Mario Party*...* Ed**

# SO TELL ME THIS...

**Seek knowledge here and all* questions shall be answered for ye**

*On the DS, what is the little port next to the earphone jack for?*
Keil Kane

***Some kind of external microphone or headset peripheral, which may or may not come out in the future. Almost every Nintendo console has an unused 'mystery' connector on it somewhere underneath, on the back, on the side... see if you can spot them all!***

*If the DS is going to get the internet, then technically it must be able to store cookies from various websites, which therefore means it must have some kind of writable memory on it. So, using this memory can you download really, really, small files onto it? Or is it actually going to have a decent size writable memory on it? If yes, this is going to totally kick 'ass' (it's ARSE by the way).*
Lewis Miller

***The Opera browser comes with a memory expansion pak for the GBA slot, which features extra RAM as well as some flash memory for storing bookmarks and cookies. Whether it's enough to store minigames or even 'grot', I have no idea. Incidentally, the Play Yan SD Card video gadget for the GBA (Japan only) can play some downloaded games, but they're so simple, they'd barely qualify for* Wario Ware*. And they can only be played in a tiny window on the screen. Helpful?***

*I have a question about your 'Freaks!' feature from issue 118. I really love these little featurettes you have near the end of NGC. Always entertaining and, most importantly, funny, they are one of the many reasons why your magazine is head and shoulders above the rest. Anyway my question is, who is Ma? You don't say which game he/she/it appears in, and being a Nintendo fanboy I thought I would have been able to easily recognise most characters. Could you please enlighten me?*
A Robinson

***Ma is the southern belle from* Big Mutha Truckers *on Gamecube and DS.***

*This month: 66% success plus some random factoids

# NGC TOP 20

## THE BEST GAMES FOR YOUR GAMECUBE!

GC TOP 20



### TOP FIVE ACTION ADVENTURE



**RESIDENT EVIL 4**
It's hillbillies' heads you're a poppin' this time in a sequel that makes the series pulse with terror once more.

**HITMAN 2**
Brazen or bathed in blood, the bar-coded baldy brilliantly lets you choose how to ply your dark trade.

**SECOND SIGHT**
The *Timesplitters* team slickly hits the mark with a tale of telekinesis in this paranormal thriller you'll want to possess.

**METAL GEAR SOLID**
An already superb stealth game, enhanced, re-voiced and prettied up into a delight.

**ETERNAL DARKNESS**
As skilfully compelling and claustrophobic as any horror novel, this uses every shock in the book.

### TOP FIVE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES



**THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER**
Brilliantly straddling the divide between mere adventure and something more substantial.

**HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE**
Wonderful, but ploughing a bit of a lone furrow as the only agricultural RPG.

**FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE**
As much a soldierly strategy as an RPG, but one with real power.

**PHANTASY STAR ONLINE: EPISODE I & II**
If you have the technology, this is a sprawling epic in both scale and longevity.

**SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS**
A 'traditional' RPG rescued from the Dreamcast that may now be showing its age.





### 1 RESIDENT EVIL 4 — 97

**CAPCOM ■ NGC/104**

Freed from the stumbling gait of the groaning undead and the limitations of last generation technology, *Resi 4* not only reinvented the series but also successfully reinvigorated the stagnant survival/horror style with an unprecedented level of innovation. For while the atmosphere of the game remains suitably suffocating, the dynamic pacing is virtually perfect, the villager carnage visceral and the visual spectacle sublime.

### 2 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER — 97



**NINTENDO NGC/81**

The sumptuous cel-shading may draw the eye, but what lies underneath will also delight your senses: magic and mystery imbues every detail.

### 3 METROID PRIME — 97



**NINTENDO NGC/76**

Distinctly different from an FPS in ambition and execution, *Prime* is supremely rewarding in the way it unveils new weaponry and stunning environments.

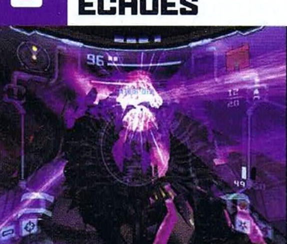
### 4 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE — 96



**NINTENDO NGC/73**

The island of Delfino is home to one of Mario's finest moments, with near perfect controls. The simple brilliance of the squirty backpack is an utter joy.

### 5 METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES — 94



**NINTENDO NGC/88**

Injecting a little light and shade into Samus Aran's world, this follow-up also adds a parallel world, a shadowy rival and a solid multiplayer.

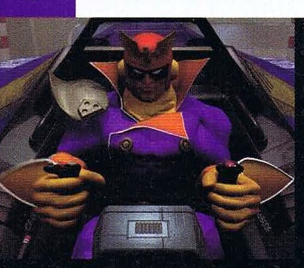
### 6 MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!! — 93



**NINTENDO NGC/88**

This remains true to the winning formula of Chain Chomps, crates and power sliding karts, despite AI rivals who keep sticking shells up your tailpipe.

### 7 F-ZERO GX — 92



**NINTENDO NGC/85**

Despite an urban sprawl of swirling neon, there's never a flaw in this fixed 60 frames per second racer: it nourishes the eyes and the soul.

### 8 PIKMIN 2 — 92



**NINTENDO NGC/99**

So perfectly conceived, so wonderfully crafted, so expertly planned that you won't actually notice you're playing a resource management sim.

## 9 SOUL CALIBUR 2 91



**NAMCO**
**NGC/85**

Combining artistry with brutality, this fast-paced fighter relies not on remembering and retaining huge strings of combos but on reactions and reflexes.

## 10 TIMESPLITTERS 2 91



**EIDOS**
**NGC/73**

Stylised to perfection, this shooter trawls history for its armoury and foes but never betrays its *Goldeneye* heritage. The multiplayer is divine.

## 11 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE 91




**NINTENDO**
**NGC/68**

Let Peach finally exact her revenge on Bowser, slap Samus or just gang up and punch Kirby repeatedly on the beak. This is an anarchic joy.

## 12 HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE 91



**UBISOFT**
**NGC/91**

The beauty in this bucolic masterpiece lies in the relaxed romancing, slow changing of seasons and lazy exploration of this odd little village.

## 13 HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN 91



**EIDOS**
**NGC/82**

The squeaky-headed shed-dwelling killer is merely the agent for you to provide the thought and tactics in this fine example of freeform butchery.

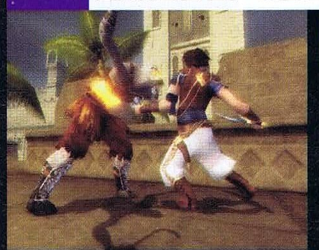
## 14 MARIO POWER TENNIS 91



**NINTENDO**
**NGC/104**

With the special moves turned off, this is a tactical battle of 'pure tennis' that shames many serious sims, but flip them back on and the aces will fly...

## 15 PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME 91



**UBISOFT**
**NGC/90**

Tight controls, precise puzzles and the Prince's supple acrobatics contrast with fluid animation, a flowing plot and a feeling of freedom.

## 16 PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND YEAR DOOR 91




**NINTENDO**
**NGC/100**

An all too often overlooked RPG that has depth and variety far beyond its superficial dimensions. Innovative combat and clever use of 2D.

## 17 FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE 90



**NINTENDO**
**NGC/114**

This strategy game with added role-playing engages you on an emotional level as well as a cerebral one as the climactic battles unfold.

## 18 WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM 90




**NINTENDO**
**NGC/87**

Despite the slightly more choppy framerate on the PAL version, this aquatic racer lets you wallow in wonderfully precise controls and effects.

## 19 BATTALION WARS 90



**NINTENDO**
**NGC/113**

A near perfect blend of the sublime yet stylised strategy of *Advanced Wars* with a control system that makes the commanding of immense armies a joy.

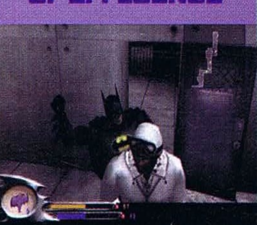
## 20 CHIBI-ROBO 90



**NNTENDO**
**NGC/120**

A charmingly magical fusion of *Metroid*, *Pikmin* and *Toy Story*. Explore a house from the point of view of a six-inch robot – you'll be glad you did.

## THE UNHOLY STINK OF EFFLUENCE



**BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW**
Less fun than swallowing razor blades and then gargling with vinegar.

**DISNEY'S MAGICAL MIRROR**
"Almost Beckettian in its non-eventfulness", we said.

**JIMMY NEUTRON: BOY GENIUS**
Only genius in a heavily ironic sense.

**THE SUM OF ALL FEARS**
Clancy's forgotten game. And with good reason: it's awful.

**UNIVERSAL STUDIOS**
A game that, inexcusably, involves *picking up rubbish*. Why not stab yourself in the heart with a fork and have done with it?

## TOP FIVE NON-APPEARANCES



**PERFECT DARK ZERO**
Originally a Gamecube exclusive, but then Rare took Microsoft's money. Can't blame 'em, can you?

**PILOTWINGS**
The N64 version was a thing of wonder – we can only hope that it turns up for Revolution.

**BLAST CORPS**
Just imagine a GC version of this destruct-'em-up – skyscrapers exploding in a million brilliant shards...

**EXCITEBIKE**
This was amazing on the N64, with wonderfully accessible-but-deep controls and bursting with extras. The missing link between *Wave Race* and *1080*.

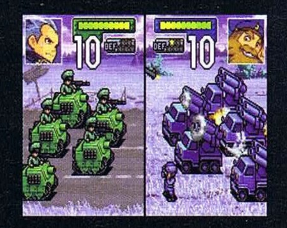
**BODY HARVEST**
This proto-*GTA* offered sprawling landscapes, dozens of vehicles to drive, and legions of insectile aliens to exterminate. Imagine *that* in pin-sharp GC-O-Vision. Sigh.

# NGC TOP 20

GBA TOP 20

## THE TOP GBA GAMES YOUR MONEY CAN BUY!







### 1 ADVANCE WARS 95

**NINTENDO • NGC/61**

Strip back the deliciously cheeky sprites and underneath you will find a fiendishly sophisticated and perfectly balanced strategy game. Even though you might not think you'll love waging war or waiting in turn to use your think-sponge, with head-to-head play via a link cable, fights taking place with tanks, planes and ships, and close-to-infinite replay value, *Advance Wars* is as close to touching the face of god as man has ever come.

### 2 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2 94







**NINTENDO NGC/64**

With a few tweaks to moderate the unbending difficulty, this doesn't make any radical changes to the excellent original, and is the better for it.

### 3 ADVANCE WARS 2 93



**NINTENDO NGC/84**

More of the same but with big tank-shaped knobs on, this carefully considered sequel will devour months of your temporal allotment on this earth-life.

### 4 MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT 93



**NINTENDO NGC/59**

Cherry picking the best moments from the SNES version and even the N64 edition, this is great solo, but sublime once you link it up with four GBAs.

### 5 FIRE EMBLEM 92



**NINTENDO NGC/97**

With the added advantage of greater emotional attachment to your warriors, this turn-based tale feels more *Advanced* on the battlefield.

### 6 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST 92



**NINTENDO NGC/77**

Considered by many to be second only to *Ocarina*, this has the finest RPG adventures of the 16 bit era but also the excellent *Four Swords* multiplayer.

### 7 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 3: YOSHI'S ISLAND 92



**NINTENDO NGC/74**

Known and loved for its wholly original levels and the barrage of mini-games, this allows Yoshi to take the reigns with perfectly crafted design.

### 8 MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA 91



**NINTENDO NGC/89**

The plumbing pair appear in a colourful RPG that mixes puzzle and platform parts with a turn-based combat system that actually rewards reactions.

### TOP FIVE SHOOTING GAMES



**GUNSTAR FUTURE HEROES**
Big, bold and slightly garish. It skimps on longevity but not on fun.

**GRADIUS**
Simple and classic. Infinite credits also take some of the edge off.

**DOOM**
A great port that is faithful, right down to the sound and the slightly disappointing ending.

**BALLISTIC: ECKS VS SEVER 2**
Hugely ambitious and heavily armed FPS that even offers four-player blasting.

**ALIEN HOMINID**
A fittingly hard modern take on the fine tradition of 2D shooters.

### JES'S TIP-TOP FIVE GBA GAMES



**ADVANCE WARS**
"The start of an all-consuming love affair that has me dreaming about little men with guns. But, er, in a good way. Um."

**MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT**
"I have problems with the too-loose handling, but it's ace nonetheless."

**METROID FUSION**
"A great slice of 2D *Metroid*-ing, even if I got lost a couple of times. Cough."

**KONAMI KRAZY RACERS**
"A brilliant alternative if you're fed up with fat men with moustaches throwing a red shell just as you're about to cross the finish line."

**ZELDA: LINK'S AWAKENING**
"Brings back fond memories of almost failing my English Literature degree from playing it too much."

## 9 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP 91



**NINTENDO NGC/101**

Along with adding the power to shrinky-dink the Rinkster, this smaller *Zelda* continues the tradition of finely honed adventuring and satisfying dungeons.

## 10 GOLDEN SUN 91



**NINTENDO NGC/83**

At first the random battles seem like an annoyance but they are key to the way this engaging and highly polished RPG reveals its depths.

## 11 FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE 91



**SQUARE ENIX NGC/87**

Any notions of simplicity in the story or swordplay are quickly confounded, for this turn-based RPG offers almost infinite variety to the player.

## 12 WARIO WARE TWISTED! 90



**NINTENDO NGC/117**

Combining the novelty of 200 games quick enough to induce epilepsy and the genius of a tilt-sensitive cartridge, this'll twist your wrists in knots.

## 13 WARIO WARE, INC 90



**NINTENDO NGC/82**

Imagine pure joy, distilled, boiled down and served in five second shots. Very simple in concept, but executed with verve, speed and cheek.

## 14 POKÉMON RUBY / SAPPHIRE (IMPORTS) 90








**NINTENDO NGC/83**

The greatest formula since E=mc²: the collecting and fighting dynamic hasn't really changed, but the sheer scale makes these RPGs hugely entertaining.

## 15 HARVEST MOON: FRIENDS OF MINERAL TOWN 90





**NATSUME NGC/91**

There might not be much 'Ooh' to go with the 'Aar', but this soothing if slightly slow farming sim has charm, chickens and dirty hoes.

## 16 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4 90



**NINTENDO NGC/86**

A top notch conversion of probably the most fondly remembered 8-bit platformer. It's short, but the desire to complete it time and again feels unchanged.

## 17 KURU KURU KURURIN 90



**NINTENDO NGC/56**

The 'ducks in spaceships' plot isn't the best thing here. That'd be the guide-a-rotating-stick-through-a-maze-against-the-clock mechanic.

## 18 METROID: ZERO MISSION 89



**NINTENDO NGC/92**

Intelligent puzzles, sprawling levels and a huge number of secrets make this refined retread almost as magnificent as *Prime* itself.

## 19 GUNSTAR FUTURE HEROES 89

**SEGA/TREASURE NGC/113**

Showing off the GBA's ability to spin, scale and scroll immensely bright sprites, this former Megadrive shooter looks anything but flat. Treasure it.

## 20 POKÉMON PINBALL: RUBY & SAPPHIRE 89

**NINTENDO NGC/87**

Despite the 'Mon collecting, there's more to these steel balls than branding. Perfect physics, a slew of mini-tables and extra games elevate it.

## TOP FIVE CLAGGY CRAPULENCE



**ARMY MEN: OPERATION GREEN**
Swiftly renamed in the **NGC** office to Operation Brown.

**CRAZY FROG RACER**
If any evidence were needed of the impending arrival of the End Times, here it be.

**MARIO PARTY ADVANCE**
A multiplayer game that, unless you've got GBA/link cable-owning friends, is resolutely single-player. Guff.

**ZELDA 2: ADVENTURE OF LINK**
A rare dark spot on Link's CV, this side-scrolling mistake is best shuffled under the carpet of forgetfulness.

**DEXTER'S LABORATORY**
Look, everyone! Dexter's cooking something up in his lab! And you know what? It's a big pile of shi - (*Cut!* – Ed)

## TOP FIVE PUZZLE GAMES



**IT'S MR PANTS**
A top down blockbuster that, despite the in-jokes with Rare's mascot, is unpretentiously addictive.

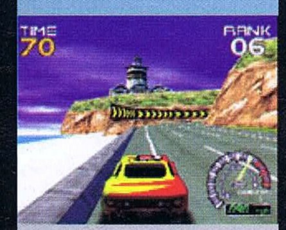
**CHUCHU ROCKET!**
Like a high speed and highly competitive version of *Lemmings* with spaceships. And mice.

**DR MARIO & PUZZLE LEAGUE**
A twin pack of two slightly aged but rather jolly and bright puzzle classics that won't fail to entertain.

**PUYO POP**
Shifting the screen and not the blocks adds originality to an already demanding puzzler.

**ZOOO**
Harder and more involving than *Zoo Keeper* on the DS, although it is less instantly appealing.

## BEST OF THE REST




**RIDGE RACER**
Crappy touch screen handling aside, this is a fine rendition of Namco's racer, and brings back plenty of happy memories of the excellent *Ridge Racer 64*.

**NINTENDO TOUCH GOLF**
Golf's an acquired taste, but there's far worse ways to acquire it than with this brilliantly accessible slice of sticksie-ball from the Big N.

**SNOWBOARD KIDS**
Sadly not as cute or fun as the N64 original, but despite its faults this is still fast and frantic snow-based racing with added weapons.

**BOMBERMAN DS**
Dull as ditchwater in single player, this is redeemed by *Bomberman* multiplayer brilliance. Eight players, bombs galore… magic.

**LOST IN BLUE**
Stranded kids' adventure where survival on a desert island is the order of the day. Initially lots of hard work and very annoying, it blossoms into something special.

**NANOSTRAY**
Old-school 2D shooter that's been lovingly rendered with splendid 3D backgrounds. It's quite old-fashioned, but is compelling and hectic.

**METROID PRIME PINBALL**
A wonderful pinballer that successfully evokes the *Metroid* universe. Beautiful graphics and fine flipper action make for a top notch time-waster.

**PAC 'N ROLL/PAC PIX**
Two fabulous *Pac Man* reinventions. The first is a *Monkey Ball*-style platformer, the second a riff on the original *Pac Man* where you draw the man himself. Both are superb.

**RESIDENT EVIL: DEADLY SILENCE**
The first *Resident Evil* exhumed yet again, but there are enough DS-specific bits to make this worth shambling though all over again.

**SUPER MONKEY BALL: TOUCH & ROLL**
The control system isn't as good as it was on the 'cube and the camera's a bit dodgy, but this still delivers simian shivers of excitement.

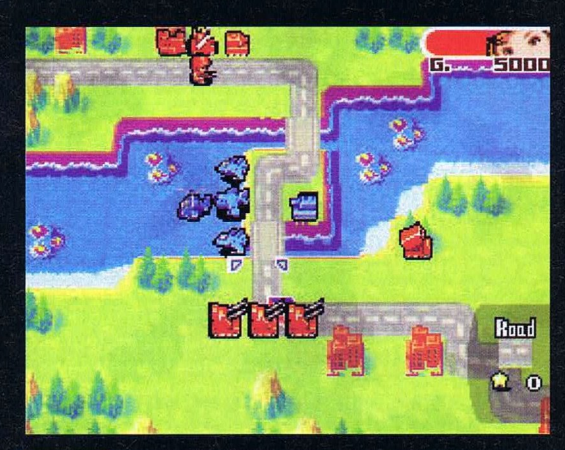
# NGC TOP 20

## THE 20 DS GAMES YOU NEED TO OWN!

DS TOP 20







### 1 ADVANCE WARS DUAL STRIKE — 95

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/110**
It looks exactly the same as the GBA games and really doesn't make particularly great use of the DS, but despite these flaws, *Advance Wars Dual Strike* still manages to be absolutely brilliant. Possibly the most addictive game ever made, this turn-based strategy affair is deep, tactical and offers literally months of play. This is a speck of gold dust amongst a watery pit of games, and is undthomaseastoubtedly our favourite DS game yet.

### 2 MARIO KART DS — 94



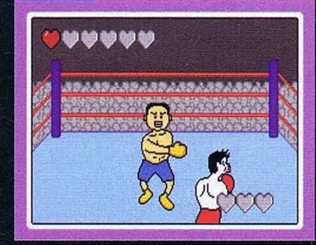
**NINTENDO**
**NGC/114**
The best *Mario Kart* ever. 32 tracks, a sprawling Mission Mode, great handling, wireless multiplayer and, best of all, online racing. Woo hoo!

### 3 ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD — 92




**NINTENDO**
**NGC/118**
Very similar to the Gamecube version, but now you can go online and four players can play simultaneously in this charm-your-socks-off virtual life.

### 4 WARIO WARE TOUCHED! — 91



**NINTENDO**
**NGC/105**
While easier than *Wario Ware*, this is one of the DS's premier titles. You've not lived until you've blown into the mic to suspend a man above a giant mouth.

### 5 KIRBY POWER PAINTBRUSH — 91





**NINTENDO**
**NGC/113**
At last! A brilliant *Kirby* game. This is somewhat similar to *Yoshi's Touch and Go*, and is a meaty, substantial, intricate 2D platformer.

### 6 MARIO AND LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME — 90





**NINTENDO**
**NGC/116**
An elaborate sequel to the GBA's *Superstar Saga* that is beautifully crafted, laugh-out-loud funny, and uses the two screens brilliantly. Highly recommended.

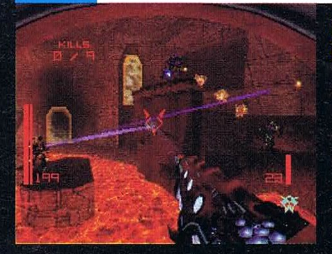
### 7 SUPER MARIO 64 DS — 90





**NINTENDO**
**NGC/105**
While not quite the perfect fit for the DS, this rejigglement of the N64 classic is still utterly superb, with new minigames and wireless multiplayer.

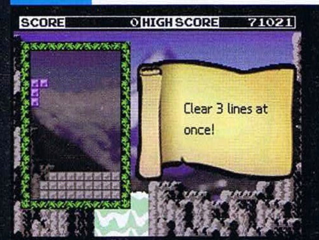
### 8 METROID PRIME: HUNTERS — 90



**NINTENDO**
**NGC/120**
A fast-paced first-person shooter with sublime online multiplayer, this is a technical triumph and a fine counterpart to the GC *Metroids*.

## 9 TETRIS DS 90






**NINTENDO NGC/120**

Overflowing with game modes, this is a hugely generous version of the classic puzzler with superb multiplayer and online fun. Brilliant.

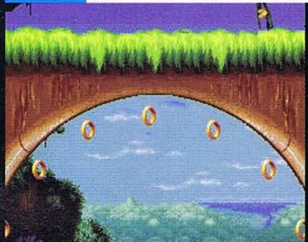
## 10 TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN SK8LAND 90

**ACTIVISION NGC/115**

The first online DS game, and one of the very best Tony Hawk's games ever made, in proper 3D, with all the great tricks and stunts. There are riches here.

## 11 SONIC RUSH 90





**SEGA NGC/114**

*Sonic Rush* is the speedy hedgehog's best game in *years*. Breathtakingly fast and well designed, this takes full advantage of the dual screens.

## 12 METEOS 89



**BANDAI NGC/108**

The best puzzler on the DS, and that's saying something, with *Zoo Keeper* and *Polarium* around. Hard to explain but thrilling to play: you need it.

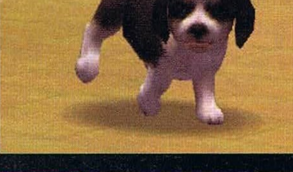
## 13 NINTENDOGS 88



**NINTENDO NGC/108**

The face-meltingly cute game that 'made' the DS. It's basic, but offers possibly the best use of the DS yet, with brilliant mic and touch screen application.

## 14 ZOO KEEPER 88




**IGNITION NGC/105**

So simple, it's animal head-swappingly fantastic, not to mention terrifyingly addictive, endlessly playable and one of the best puzzlers ever.

## 15 PROJECT RUB 85



**SEGA NGC/105**

Superior to its recent sequel, this charming slice of lady-wooing madness is chock-full of minigames and is a dandy alternative to *Wario Ware*.

## 16 ANOTHER CODE: TWO MEMORIES 85

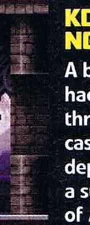


**NINTENDO NGC/108**

A brief but hugely enjoyable point-and-click adventure that uses the all of the DS's features in novel ways. It's short, but full of really good puzzles.

## 17 CASTLEVANIA: DAWN OF SORROW 84





**KONAMI NGC/112**

A brilliant-looking hack-and-slash trawl through Dracula's castle that has huge depth and plays like a supernatural version of *Metroid*.

## 18 PHOENIX WRIGHT: ACE ATTORNEY 82

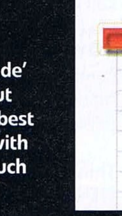





**CAPCOM NGC/118**

Objection! Shout that at every opportunity in this fab courtroom sim that lets you gather evidence and pick testimonies apart. Silly and wholly original.

## 19 POLARIUM 82



**NINTENDO NGC/105**

An ingenious little tile-flipping puzzler. It's pretty tough and lacks the accessibility of *Zoo Keeper*, but in its own way it's just as engrossing.

## 20 VIEWTIFUL JOE: DOUBLE TROUBLE 81

**CAPCOM NGC/115**

Capcom adapt *Joe* wonderfully for the DS, creating a clutch of well-considered new superpowers. Inventive superheroism of the highest order.

## AVOID!

**ASPHALT URBAN GT**
Astonishingly bad racer that handles like a stone cow, with a cretinous boost system that makes no sense whatsoever.

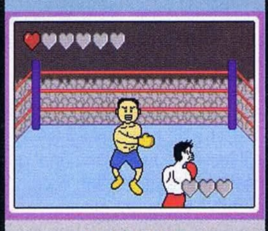
**NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED**
Greener described this as "hilariously inept", and that just about sums it up, justified nicely by a paltry 17% score.

**MARVEL NEMESIS**
A great cast of superheroes grace one of the worst fighting games we've ever seen. What a waste.

**PING PALS**
Basically Pictochat, but rubbish. And you get Pictochat free on your DS. Don't fall for this, kids.

**BUBBLE BOBBLE REVOLUTION**
A real shame, this, as it royally messes up the delicate balance of *Bubble Bobble*'s beauty. It made Martin cry.

## KITTSY'S TOP FIVE BESTEST GAMES



**WARIO WARE**
"The clarion call of the 'new Nintendo' – going their own way, doing their own thing, and doing it brilliantly."

**TETRIS DS**
"I'm currently getting spanked online by robot Americans who appparently have compu-brains and mechanical fingers."

**ADVANCE WARS**
"Allows me to play soldiers without growing a beard or painting Space Marines. Mint."

**ANIMAL CROSSING**
"The essential dichotomy that lies at the heart of Kitts – I'm a barely-controllable violence machine, but love *Animal Crossing*."

**SNOWBOARD KIDS**
"Not a patch on the original, but bum-massaging fun nonetheless."

# THE NGC BACK PAGE QUIZ




**The end of the road!** But there's time for one more page of fun before we turn off the lights.

"Everyone I know goes away, in the end." So sang Johnny Cash, heartbreakingly. Thus we leave you, with this, the final issue of **NGC** – but despair not! For next month we will be reborn, as something new. Like Dr Who, but with better hair, and more games.

We'll leave you with one final quiz, before the inevitable regeneration occurs. And this month, you're not playing for any old prize: we need to sweep clean the office before the chairs are put on the tables and the new magazine (ooh, what will it be called?) is created, from a potent brew stewed in the **NGC** cauldron, consisting of Kittsy's toenail clippings, Mark's nasal sputum, the last remaining lock of Jes's hair and the dessicated remains of Paul's Plant. Therefore, we're going to give the five winning entries – plucked from an enormous hat – a choice bundle of stuff from the **NGC** office. We've got all manner of things; Koopman's clog's, all the way from Holland; a selection of DS and Gamecube games; the army helmet that's been used for every military-themed photo shoot we've ever had; a magic eight ball; an enormous vile-green Gameboy sweatshirt that would fit a giant; a Pokemon monopoly set; the **NGC** Christmas elf hat; and much more crap – sorry, nostalgic merchandise – besides. Something for everyone, in fact.

Best of luck! You'll need it. Probably.

**1. "It's not just for girls who like crying." No, we're not talking about Martin's 'evening' technique – a complex manoeuvre he likes to call 'The Wincemaker' – but rather one of the games that we reviewed in this issue. Which one is it, do you think?**

**2. "101% teh Wi-Fi pwnage". On which page have we used this netspeak? (But cleverly and satirically, unlike the legions of children worldwide who've had their English stunted by the EVIL INTERNET).**

**3. "66% success and some random factoids". Not a bad average, we guess, but which specific section of the magazine is this referring to?**

**4. "Behatted spike-neck dogs". Sounds terrifying – second only, in the Big NGC Book Of What To Be Scared Of, to the Spindly Wighat – but which game does this phrase refer to?**

**5. If you were a close personal friend of NGC's resident workaholic Mark Green, would you call him:**
**1) Greener Schnitzel**
**2) Dr Robotnik's Mean Green Machine**
**3) Ooh, Parp-Parp, It's Herr Green-A-Lot, Gesundheit!**

**6. In which game can you ride a dolphin to a 'special island'? And no, that's not a euphemism, although the phrase is a component of 'The Wincemaker' (see question 1).**

**7. On which page does Alex Cooke make the stupendously awful pun 'Earth, Wound and Fire'? (It's why we had him killed. If you get down to the Bath municipal tip, you might find a bin bag or two of remains left.)**

**8. What's Dexter cooking up in his laboratory?**

**9. Yoinks! It's Yoshi. No, not really – you can stop looking behind you now, honestly – but on which cover of this magazine did this immortal phrase appear?**

**10. What is uta garuta? (Clue: it's not that lady Greener met down the alley late one night when he was living in Budapest).**

**Bonus Question: If you were a Disney exec about to suggest a Winnie The Pooh game for Nintendo Wii, what would you call it (that wouldn't get you sacked)?**

### HOW TO ENTER

Entering is easier than falling down a manhole. Send your entry on a piece of paper in an envelope, or on a postcard, to:

**Thin Quizzy**
**NGC** Magazine
Future Publishing
30 Monmouth St
Bath
BANES
BA1 2BW

### THE RULES

1. Closing date for entries is June 12th 2006.
2. Employees of Future Publishing, their relatives and El Cookerino Grande, Ole! may not enter.
3. I like 'em round, and big.
4. Goodbye, everyone. We had a hell of a time. Sniff.


Mobile Games
01
MEDIEVAL COMBAT
Gamespot 'very impressive'
play 49
02
2005 REAL FOOTBALL
'Best Mobile Game ever'
play 43
03
MIDNIGHT POOL
Gamespot 9.2/10
play 39
04
BROTHERS IN ARMS
IGN 9.5/10 Great Game!
play 51
05
SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY
Gamespot 8.4/10
play 41
06
ASPHALT URBAN GT2
Gamespot 9/10 'Superb'
play 53
To order a game just text the Item Code to 60111 eg. to order Asphalt Urban GT2 text play 53 to 60111
powered by gameloft
£4.50 each game ordered.
TRAIN WITH THE BEST
Learn Effective Street Techniques
Martial Arts Videos now on your Mobile!
ATTACK2
ANTON VAN THOMAS
Wing Chun Master
See the Masters show you the techniques that really work on the street.
ATTACK1
IAN 'THE MACHINE' FREEMAN
UFC Veteran
ATTACK3
MICHAEL WONG
Tai Chi Combat
MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING
ATTACK5
NEIL ADAMS MBE
Olympian
Some of the techniques shown: How to defend yourself and attack when the fight goes to the ground. Brazilian Jiu Jitsu World Champion shows you how its all done.
Cage Rage Mixed Martial Arts
Some of the techniques shown:
Defence Against Straight Punch
Defence Against Jab & Rear Hook
Defense Against A Grab
ATTACK4
DAVE O'DONNEL
£1.50 each
This is your amazing chance to get up close and personal with some of the best martial artists from around the world, don't miss it...
Full colour and sound demonsration videos, showing effective street techiques. Learn what each art has to offer against various forms of attacks. All techniques are shown from numerous angles in slow speed with detailed instructions for easy learning. All videos are taught in English for easy learning. Join the club now!
To subscribe just text the item code to 83535 eg. to order ATTACK4 just text ATTACK4 to 83535
Get the latest Simpsons animations in our club
To subscribe Text SIMPSONS to 83535
The Singhsons Video
To subscribe Text SINGHSONS to 83535 NOW!
Hilarious!
Old Skool Ringtones
Ryu 11
Ken 24
Blanka 46
Guile 47
Chun-Li 104
E-Honda 121
Dhalsim 122
Zangief 123
M-Bison 133
Street Fighter II
Only £1.50 each
Get the stage music from your favorite characters from this old skool classic. Text your character name to 83535 to order now
To order just text the name to 83535 eg. to order Ryu just text Ryu to 83535
Manga Girls
Join the Manga Girls club now! To subscribe text ANIME to 83535
£1.50
To order a manga girl animation just text anime to 83535
Funny Videos
Pulp Politician
pulp
Arnie Goes Wild
arnie
Saddam Gangsta Rap
saddam
The Real Michael Jackson Interview
MJ
Sesame Street Spoof
sesame
Eminem Rap Song
eminem
Star Wars Gangsta Rap
gangsta
£1.50 each
Join the club! To subscribe just text the Item Code to 83535 eg. to order jordan text jordan to 83535
You must be 16 years old or over to use these services. You must have the bill payers permission before using these services. By selecting any item you are agreeing to download and view that item. You will be billed the amount shown via reverse SMS. All phones must be colour and WAP enabled. Standard GPRS or GMS data transfer costs apply. No liability is accepted for any delay omissions or damage or loss of data incurred by any party. The Funny Videos service is a subscription service costing £1.50/video. You receive 3 videos/week. To opt out text the same keyword you used to opt in followed by stop or just send stop. The Manga girls service is a subscription service. Each animation costs £1.50. You receive 3 animations/week. To opt out text anime stop or stop. The Simpsons animations is a subscription service. Each animation costs £3.00. You receive 3 animations/week. To opt out text simpsons stop or stop. The Singhsons video service is a subscription service. Each video costs £1.50. You receive 3 videos/week. To opt out text singhsons stop or stop. Deadly Attacks is a subscription service. Each video costs £1.50. You receive 3 videos/week. To opt out text back the keyword you used to join followed by stop or just send stop. Games provider Gameloft Ltd. All rights reserved. For customer care please email customerservices@rudefone.com or call 0870 8554194 10am-5pm Mon-Fri.

Nintendo




Use Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection to drop in on your friends around the world. Travel in groups of up to 4, admire what they've done to their town, and enjoy the complete freedom of Animal Crossing: Wild World. See you there. Out 31st March.

www.nintendo.co.uk

NGC 92%

